

A Grain of Sand



Larson Farm 1950



Larson Farm 2010

Life Reflections of Don Larson

A GRAIN OF SAND
Life Reflections of
Don Larson

By Don Larson

2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Home: Location, History, etc.	5
Family: Genealogy, History, Youth, College	8
Church: Sunday School, Baptism, Confirmation, Pastors	19
School: Elementary, High School, College, Extra credits	23
Military: Draft, Iowa National Guard, Training	29
Public Service: 4-H, Township, Fire Board, Coop Board	32
Seed Business: 1974 on, Companies, Trips	40
Old & new neighbors: Two mile radius, Old Friends	47
Farming: First farm, Landlords, Cattle, Machinery, Changes, Technology.....	56
Childhood Memories of Farm.....	66
Cars, Trucks, Airplanes	74
Other Events: Health, Mud, Fire.....	78
Great Mechanics, Mowing	80
Current Activities: Family, Windmills, Pipe-lines	81



Larson Farm 1950



Larson Farm 2000

Home: Location, History, etc.

My name is Don Larson. This booklet is a collection of events of my life of my 75 years on this earth. I was born in Lutheran Hospital, Fort Dodge, IA., on November 9, 1939 to Alice and Kenneth Larson of Gowrie, IA. I am the oldest of four children I still live on my home farm in Section 29 of Clay Twp., Webster County, IA. Our farm, 160 acres, was bought in 1927 by my grandfather, Warner Larson, for \$150 per acre. The farm is a productive soil, mostly Webster, Nicolette, Canisteo soil type. It was originally drained when the county tiles were put in 1910-1912. I still have the original tile maps. Through the years, Dad improved and added to the tile system. In 1994 I patterned tiled the home "80". Until 1982 the farm was in a rotation of hay, corn, and soybeans. We always had a lot of livestock. Dad farrowed 20 sows in the spring and fall with no farrowing crates. We fed out about 40 cattle every year. We milked four cows up to 1952. We also had about 300 chickens for eggs and meat. Now the farm is in continuous corn and I will discuss this in detail in a later chapter.

In 1974, my dad wrote about the history of Clay Township. I would like to include in his words what he wrote.

"Clay Township was officially organized November 5, 1872. It was named after Henry Clay. The first settlers in the township were a man by the name F.B. Drake (1867) and a man by the name of Even Haatvedt. West of Drake's house was nothing but open prairie and hills all the way to Sioux City. Clay Township was mostly prairie grass, sloughs and ponds. Two of the larger sloughs in the township were known as the Five Coat slough and the other was a large one in the southeast part of the township known as Blair's Lake. Five Coat slough was in the north central part of Clay. Both of these covered several hundred acres.

In the spring and summer the prairie was beautiful with the many native flowers of all colors. There were many song and game birds. Wild ducks and geese were the most plentiful of the game birds around the sloughs, but on the prairie itself there were also lots of prairie chickens to be found.

In the winter the pioneers had to be on the lookout for blizzards, for to be caught on the open prairie in a blizzard was very dangerous indeed. Another hazard was the prairie fires, which would sweep over the land in the fall and threaten their barns and homes. They would help each other in trying to put these fires out.

Some of the early settlers in the township were: Jacob Phillips, J.S. Anderson, Jonas Peterson, John Samuelson, C.H. Lennarson, Chas. G. Knock, A.B. Woodard, Andrew Swanson, James Wild, Oscar Nelson, Gustav Lundgren, John Miles, Alva Carr, Jim Alstott, Gust Freed, Charley Freed, Thor Edwards, Alfred (Cobb) Peterson, and Joe Vosika. Most of the settlers were Scandinavian, but there also some from England and Bohemia. There was also one Negro family named, John Russells, who farmed here several years.

The early settlers depended on their livestock for a living, as there was no way of getting grain to market, because there were no roads then. They raised a little grain, but there was plenty of prairie hay and life gradually improved for them.

Drainage was to be the final solution for conquering the flat wet land. When Webster County was formed into drainage districts, around 1900, Clay Township was of course part of that plan. The first dredge ditch (No. 5) south of Callender, Iowa was started in 1904. It drained a considerable part of the west part of Clay Township. From then on it was up to each farmer or group of farmers, in a joint effort, to go together on main tiles to the dredge. Then each farmer had to construct his own laterals on land that he owned. Other dredge ditches were made in the east part of Clay a few years later (1908-1910)

There was a sorghum mill on the Jacob Phillips farm in Sec. 21. Farmers would bring their cane stalks in the fall to be pressed. The juice would then be converted into molasses. This mill operated for several years from 1910 till the early twenties.

The only railroad in Clay Twp. was constructed around 1906. It ran north and south through the east part of the township. There were two stations on this railroad, one named Lundgren the other named Crooks. The Crooks station was later named Palm Grove. There were general stores and post offices at both of those places, but none exist today. However there is a grain elevator at each location today.

With the coming of the dredges and the railroad, more settlers came in and soon the rural schools began to have more pupils. The first school in Clay Twp. was built in 1873 in the northwest part of the township near Callender. In the first session of school, there were only 12 students in the whole township. As more settlers came in, the school building was moved to the central part of the township, in Section 22. This was a small building and in 1886 it was sold to a farmer in the section just north of section 22 for \$20. Clay Center School was then built, which was larger (34 ft. wide by 36 ft. long). It is now known as Clay Township Hall. When it was built, it cost only \$625. It will soon be 88 years old. The acre of ground where it stands was bought for \$16. The other school houses in Clay Twp. Were built between 1877 and 1885.

When the township was drained, the problem of roads arose, as the need for getting crops and livestock to market became more important. From 1900 to 1930 most of the roads in the area were graded up with dirt 2 or 3 ft. higher than the ground level. In succeeding years the roads were covered with gravel and today all roads are graveled and some black topped. Highway U.S. 169 is paved and runs north and south through the township. When the roads were established the rural telephone lines were built and later the electric lines. The first rural electric lines in Clay Twp. were built in 1918.

There is one cemetery located in the northwest section of Clay Twp. It covers 10 acres and has graves that are over a hundred years old.

The pioneers brought their religious faith with them when they immigrated to Iowa. They would hold meetings in their homes until they could build a church of their own and have their own pastor. One of these was the Swedish Christian Evangelical. They held meetings several times a year and pastors from a distance would come to their homes. This group was organized in 1890 and in 1891 they decided to build a meeting house or church. For some reason or other this never materialized and the church was never built. Some of the early settlers who started and had to abandon this project were: Andrew Peterson, Gust Lundgren, L.M. Larson, J.A. Molstedt, John Lundgren and Andrew Swanson.

Another early religious group in the township was the United Brethren. It is now known as the United Methodist and is located near the Lundgren Station. It was organized in 1885 and the first church was built in 1895. It burned in 1927 and was rebuilt. It now has around 40 members.

In Pioneer days land sold from \$5 to \$20 an acre, but after the drainage they increased up to \$150 per acre. Land prices have really increased at the present time a good piece of land would sell now from \$900 up to \$1,400 or more per acre.

Clay Township has very high percentage of tillable land and the future looks good, but we must remember our heritage of the past and the struggles and fortitude of our pioneer ancestors.”



Remodeled Home 2012

Family: Genealogy, History, Youth, College

Our family, like many, has a pretty diverse background. My dad of course is of Swedish ancestry. Dad was born “next door” about 200 yards from where I live now. His dad homesteaded the original “80” in 1900.



Warner Larson Family

*Front (left to right) Margaret, Warner, Amanda, Amy
Back (left to right) Kenneth, Bernard, Herbert, Franklin*

My grandfather, Warner Larson, came from Sweden in 1890 at the age of 19. He was born in Dalhem, Kalmar County, Sweden in 1872. He left his parents, two sisters, and a brother behind in Sweden. He came with a small trunk, five loaves of black bread, and a few dollars in his pocket. His mother died in Sweden. Warner brought his brother, Arvid, to America in 1900 and his father, David, and two sisters, Lydia and Theresa, in 1906. His future wife, Amanda Anderson, parents came from Sweden about 20 years earlier. Warner had a job as a hired hand lined up with the Freed family, near Burnside, when he stepped off the train in Burnside. He walked in the mud, behind a wagon which carried his trunk, for over four miles to his first job in his new country. Later he worked for his future father-in-law, John S. Anderson, who homesteaded in Clay Twp., after working as a foreman for the railroad in Ill.

Warner and Amanda were married in 1896. They had a total of ten children, of which six lived to adulthood. By all accounts, both Warner and Amanda were great individuals. Warner was one of the first trustees in Clay Township. He helped organize the Gowrie Consolidated School, when all the country schools were brought together. He was on the board when the new Gowrie School was built in 1923. About a year later he was part of a four man group that planned and built Lutheran Hospital in Fort Dodge. In 1930 he was Chairman of the Board of Zion Lutheran Church in Gowrie when they decided to build the beautiful church which is still active today. In 1932 he was appointed President of the National Bank of Gowrie by the Federal Reserve to capitalize and keep the bank open in the early days of the Great Depression.

During Warner's community endeavors, his wife, Amanda, was active in community and church work.

She was a kind and generous woman. My dad said she was especially kind to the neighbors who lived on my farm. The mother had died when the youngest child was 1 ½ years old; with nine children the father definitely needed help until homes could be found. Amanda brought clothing and food on a regular basis. Amanda could handle a horse and buggy pretty good too. Dad recalled one time when a horse almost got the best of her.

One of my favorite stories of Grandpa Warner was in the 1920's when a young boy had lost a leg in a train accident in Fort Dodge. Warner went on a personal mission across southern Webster County to raise money for the boy's family. I have the list of people Warner contacted. There were about three pages of donations of 25 to 50 cents from Dayton, Harcourt and Gowrie.



Great-Grandparents Martin and Viola Carstenson 1900

Table of Contents

My Dad, Kenneth, was born on March 17, 1906 on the home place. He was like a middle child of 10 children. All babies were larger in those days. My Aunt Margaret said she thought Dad was the smallest of all, but he weighed over ten pounds. Dad's given name was John Kenneth, but he always went by Kenneth, Ken, or Kenny except on his legal papers. That generation read a lot; Dad was no exception, reading at least two daily papers all his life. Uncle Frank always said Dad's middle name should have been work. Dad never shied away from work, especially the hard way. He once told me that he harnessed up to 30 horses in one day when they farmed a lot of land. Dad graduated from Gowrie High School in 1923. Boys then did not go to college if they had an opportunity to farm. I always said Dad could have been a history teacher or similar profession as he had a keen interest in history and geography. Dad went to North Dakota to work in the wheat fields for two years after high school. He roomed there with his Aunt and Uncle at Jamestown, North Dakota. As Warner bought more land, Dad came home to help farm with his brothers.

Dad met my mother, Alice Hansen, at a dance near Paton. Mom had a real poor and tragic childhood. Her mother, Irma, died a few days after Mother's birth and having just turned fifteen years of age. Her father was John Hansen. Mom was raised by her grandparents Viola and Martin Carstensen. Mom graduated from Paton High School in 1932. She had many childhood friends in Dawson Township, northwest of Paton. Her closest friend was Fern Fogarty, who later married Charlie Parker from Scranton. Fern and Charlie moved to Arkansas. After Charlie died, Fern also wrote a book about her life. Viola and Martin moved to Gowrie around 1940 after the Great Depression. Viola was the only grandmother I knew, because Grandma Larson died in 1936.

Mom and Dad were married August 23, 1936 at her grandparent's house. It was one of the hottest Iowa summers on record. It was 108 degrees on their wedding day. They went to the Wisconsin Dells on their honeymoon. Mom, being raised so frugal, kept track of every nickel spent on that trip. They returned to a brand new house that Grandpa Warner had built for them in the summer of '36. It was a very nice house for the time, with electricity and running water. Dad thought the house cost around \$6,700, labor included.

That brings me to a story within a story. After Grandma Larson (Amanda) died in January of 1936, I suppose as sort of an emotional release, Grandpa Larson built three new houses in three years. The first was my folks in 1936. A second house was built in 1937 in Burnside Township for my Uncle Frank and his wife, Jeanette. The third was built in 1938 for my Uncle Herbert and wife, Elizabeth in Burnside Township, section 6. The last was identical to the first, except turned about 90 degrees. In Sweden, Grandpa had some background in a sawmill, so he knew something about lumber. John Lind and son Philip from Gowrie were the primary builders of those houses.



Larson Kids
(left to right) Jane, Bob, Mary, Don

I am the oldest of four children. My siblings are Mary, who is about two years younger than I am. Mary is a retired school teacher and airline registration agent. She is very intelligent, someone who reads a lot and is current on the latest movies. She was married to Roy Schneider of Gowrie. They later divorced. They had two children, Brian and Robin. They both now live in North Carolina. Mary married David Zodl in 1992. They bought a home in Gilbert, AZ. David was a very creative carpenter and remodeled their home into a beautiful Southwest style. He passed away in 2001. Mary is a very out-going and personable individual. I'm proud to call her my sister.

Robert (Bob) was my only brother. He was very athletic and handsome guy. He was on the first football team when Prairie of Gowrie resumed football in 1961. Bob was also a school teacher, mostly 6th grade. Bob married Janice Kassube in 1967 in Weeping Water, Nebraska. They had two children, Michelle and Mark. Michelle lives in Gilbert, AZ. and Mark in Ohio. They both have two daughters each. Bob and Jan later divorced and Bob remarried Sue Burres from Lincoln, NE. Almost Bob's entire teaching career was in Lincoln, NE. Bob died in 1997 from a stroke at age 54.



Larson Family 1986
Front (left to right) Alice, Kenneth
Back (left to right) Bob, Don, Jane, Mary

Jane, my youngest sister, is six years younger than me. She graduated from Iowa University with a degree in education. She taught school in Iowa for a few years before moving to Arizona with her husband, Wayne King. They later divorced and never had any children. Jane has had other men in her life, but never remarried. My siblings all had a master degree in education.

We had a wonderful childhood, with a lot of good memories growing up on the farm. We built tree houses, built snow forts, played with our pets had friends over to play ball, and rode horses. Our parents were the best and most of the time tolerated our misbehavior. I'm very proud and honored to call Mary, Bob, and Jane my siblings. Life, when we grew up, was much simpler and not so complicated. I won't say we were never bored, but we always found something to do. No smart phones or TV then. I was fourteen when we got our first TV.

Now, back to my dad's immediate family. His oldest surviving brother was Herbert. Dad always said Grandpa Warner worked Herbert too hard, being the oldest son. Herbert's first wife died after one year of marriage. He remarried Elizabeth Suer from Lehigh. They had two children, Bernard and Frances. Herbert bought cattle after he retired from farming for a major company at Estherville, IA. Herbert died from cancer in 1960. Bernard, "Bernie", is my oldest living cousin. He farmed his home farm for a few years, later farmed near Lake City. Then he moved to Mabel, Minnesota in the late '60's. Later he retired to Decorah, IA.



*Warner Larson Children
(left to right) Franklin, Amy, Kenneth, Margaret, Bernard, Herbert*

Frances married Horace Lantz from the Somers area. They had seven children, six girls and one son. Frances, "Frannie", was a real special person. She was an excellent cook, and made quilts for her family and nursing homes in the area. She also was very active in her church. They never missed a ballgame when their children played. Frances died, too soon, from cancer in 2006. Horace now lives in a retirement home in Ames.

Amy was Dad's older sister by two years. She was a wonderful lady. She and her husband, Floyd, Lochray were some of my folk's closest friends. Amy went to Iowa State Teachers College (UNI) in Cedar Falls. Her first teaching job was at Lohrville. She roomed at Lohrville, but Dad always tried to bring her home on week-ends and holidays. When she married Floyd, she moved to Fort Dodge. Floyd worked at the Royal 400 service station. Amy taught at Duncombe elementary. She was recognized as teacher of the year at least once in Fort Dodge. They had two children, Jack and Bonnie. Amy died, also too young, of cancer in 1963. Floyd died about 15 years later of natural causes. Both Jack and Bonnie died early. Jack died from cancer and Bonnie from complications of Multiple Sclerosis.

Margaret was a couple years younger than Dad. Margaret was also a very unique person. She was a very petite lady with great intellectual ability. She tested out of high school at the age of 15 and graduated from Iowa State Teachers College at 17. Although she was never "wrong", Dad liked to tell the story of when they were all in country school. Margaret had misspelled the word "purple", so she had to stay after school and write "purple" correctly on the board. The brothers waited for her after school in the ditch down the road so they could cover for her when they went home. Everything went OK for awhile until mother, Amanda, was in Gowrie one day and found out about the incident from her teacher, Inez Nelson.

Margaret's first teaching job was at Sioux Center, Iowa, teaching literature. She enjoyed teaching, especially directing the trouble-makers to a better way of life. Margaret met her future husband, Jesse Chesnut in western Iowa where he was the football coach. "Chesty" was a very nice man. He was witty, intelligent so was a good fit for Margaret. He especially enjoyed doing "magic" tricks for the small nieces and nephews. They never had any children. They lived most of their life in Lincoln, NE, with stops in Cedar Rapids, IA, and Mankato, MN.

Chesty was a salesman for Jamesway Mfg., a short-line farm equipment company. Chesty died in 1983.

Margaret later moved back to an apartment in Fort Dodge, IA in 1993 where she lived for at least 10 years. As she became unable to care for herself, we had to move her to a care facility in Fort Dodge and Gowrie, where she died of natural causes at the age of 95.

Franklin was Dad's next younger brother. He married Jeanette Nelson of Harcourt in 1937. They moved to Grandpa's farm near Burnside and also into a brand new home. Franklin was well known in the community. He was out-spoken, but very intelligent, so he could back up what he was talking about. In public service he was chairman of the board at Lutheran Hospital, the Farmers Coop Board, the Gowrie Bank Board and other community endeavors. He was a good farmer, especially with livestock. Jeanette was an excellent cook, well known for her kitchen creations. She also cared a lot for her mother and brother Kenny Nelson.

Frank and Jeanette had two children, Lois and Judy. Lois and I are the same age. Lois is very intelligent. She was a teacher for a few years and later worked at Rock Island, IL for the government and at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

Lois is now retired and lives in North Augusta, S. C. Lois married Jack Elkin, a fellow student at the University of Iowa. He originally was from Davenport. They were both active with the young Democrats at Iowa U. Jack was a teacher and principal in his career. Jack died in 2004. He is buried in Lost Grove Cemetery near his first born son, Stephen, who died of cancer at the age of three.

Judy was a registered nurse. Judy married Richard Martinson of Harcourt, IA. "Marty" worked for the city of Des Moines. They lived in Des Moines for many years, moving to Arizona when they retired. Later they moved back to Des Moines and now winter in Arizona. They are loyal Hawkeye supporters, as was my Uncle Frank. Marty and Judy are great people to visit with.

Bernard was Dad's youngest brother. He and his wife, Frances, lived next door to our family farm. He was younger than Dad and had more up-to-date ideas than Dad. Bernard married Frances Sorenson, of Roelyn, in 1940. Frances was a private lady, a good cook and a good mother. They had a lot of tragedy in their lives. Their oldest son, Dennis, died of leukemia at the age of five. Their second son, David, died in an accident in the Dominican Republic in 1967 while serving in the Peace Corps. Their main cattle barn burned down in 1971. Bernard died of a heart attack in 1975. My Dad found him lying beside a mower where Bernard was mowing the roadside. Frances died about twelve years later of complications of Alzheimer's disease. Their daughter, Caryl, survives and is retired in Gowrie. She and her husband, Ed McWeeny, have five outstanding children. Bernard, Dad and I worked together every day, planting, harvesting and working with livestock. Bernard was a great guy with a big heart.

I suppose this is as good time as any to review the women in my life. My first date was with a neighbor girl, Deanna Williams. I believe it was in the fall of my junior year, 1955. Deanna was a cute, athletic type girl. Her dad, Delbert, had moved here from Casey, IA and rented the farm a half mile west of our home. I rode my bike down there to ask for a date, because I had no car. Delbert was a little rough around the edges and liked to pull my leg. So he got on my case about having no car, so how in the h*** was I going anywhere. So I told him I had already talked to my dad about taking his car. We went to the drive-in theater south of Fort Dodge. That was my one and only date with Deanna. She eventually married a farmer from Galva, IA. My second date was arranged by Willis Schroeder, a classmate, his sister-in-law, Shirley Burger. She lived on a farm between Gowrie and Paton. She was a very nice girl, who helped her dad do farm work. She was not interested in me and we eventually parted ways. Exceptions to these two girls were two other girls who asked me to be their prom dates. When I was a senior my classmate, Evelyn Hade, invited me. She was probably the most intelligent girl in my class. I was not too interested. After I had graduated another neighbor girl, Pat Heath, asked me to escort her to her senior prom. She was a first class lady, who later married a good friend of mine, Lyle Schwendemann. Pat was beautician, who later got a degree in teaching. Lyle was also a teacher and a gifted artist. In 1962, I got acquainted with Paulette Mefferd in Laurens. She was my first steady girlfriend. Her dad, Paul, had a bird hobby, similar to mine. That is how we got to know each other. Paulette was a guard on the Laurens girls' basketball team. She was tall; I think 5'9" or 5'10". Her dad was the founder of Iowa Industrial. They made hydraulic cylinders and other equipment for industry. The Mefferds also had a home at Okoboji. I actually water skied behind Tom Medford's boat. He was Paulette's brother. We had a good relationship for over a year. She went to Iowa U in the fall of 1963 to be an x-ray technician. We drifted apart after that. I think she wanted a life different than being a farm wife.

We were still walking beans in 1965 and I had about 400 acres of beans to walk. I always hired crews to walk beans. One of the crews was put together by Pat Creger, a Gowrie girl. She was only 16 and I was almost 26 years old. She was personable and a hard worker. Pretty soon we were dating. She was also a member of my church. We enjoyed some of the same things, like tractor pulling, car races and snow-mobiling. She didn't care to go to college, so we got married shortly after she graduated from high school. The first years were pretty good as she helped me with the farm work and our circle of friends was great. Our son, Alan, was born in 1968 and our daughter, Lisa, was born in 1970. By 1975, after moving four times, Pat became more disillusioned and distant in our marriage and asked for a divorce, which was final in 1976.



Jean & Don Larson
May 6, 1978

The light and joy of my life, was introduced to me in our church in 1977. Jean Siefken had lost her husband, Paul, in a car accident near Waterloo, in 1976. Jean was a registered nurse, who moved back to Gowrie to be near her parents, Edwin and Clela Richman. Maxine Nordstrom, whose daughter-in-law, Karol, was a sister to Jean, introduced us. We were both a little shell-

Table of Contents

shocked at what had happened in our lives, but we eventually started dating getting to know our families. We both had similar values and backgrounds. The irony of our “first” meeting was that Jean had graduated from Moorland in 1959 and our paths had never crossed. Jean’s son, Jon, was just five months older than my son, Alan and Julie was about two years younger than Lisa. We got a little static about four kids in four years. Jean’s family had a farm background, but her dad, Edwin, had some allergies, so went to college and got a degree in education. He was a teacher and superintendent for many years. Edwin always had a large garden wherever he was. His three brothers farmed until they retired. Jean was born in Wayne County, near, Humeston, IA. Her cousin still owns the home farm. Clela was from the Roe family who also grew up near Humeston. None of her family remained on the farm. Jean and I were married on May 6, 1978 in Zion Lutheran in Gowrie by Pastor Dean Sudman. We honey-mooned in Missouri. That time of year, between corn and bean planting. I was concerned about planting. NO NEED TO WORRY, it rained almost three inches the night of our wedding. The first five months we lived in Jean’s house in Gowrie. That fall, my folks moved to Gowrie and we moved to the farm. We’ve been on the farm ever since. We remodeled the farm kitchen in 1988 and a more complete remodel in 2012. Jean retired as a nurse at Friendship Haven in 1995. Jean has always had a garden and some beautiful flower gardens on the farm. This is our home and we both hope we can stay here as long as we are able. I love Jean very much.

Church: Sunday School, Baptism, Confirmation, Pastors



*Zion Lutheran Church
Gowrie, IA*

My church, Zion Lutheran, has always been a big part of my life. My church community has always been there for me. Dr. Verner Swanson baptized me at my Grandpa Warner's house in Gowrie. I do not know why it wasn't in the church. I believe Dr. Swanson was here for 18 years. Our family was always real active in the church. Warner was Chairman of the Church Council when the current building was finished in the spring of 1931 at a cost of \$67,000. Like all rural churches our membership is probably about half of what it was in 1930. The grand piano in our sanctuary was given to our church by Warner in memory of my Grandma, Amanda Larson. My early memories of Sunday School were Bible stories. The most memorable ones were given by Gladys Telleen; Ruth Swanson was in charge of the Sunday school. She did a wonderful job. Our Christmas program was always the high-light for the year and passing out goodies afterwards.



Confirmation Class 1954

Front (left to right) Gary Ehn, Joyce Peterson, Gaylee Sellstrom, Evelyn Hade, Janice Anderson, Douglas Dixon

Back (left to right) Pastor C. H. Hall, Donald Larson, Nels Neraal, Roger Bloomquist, Bruce Danielson, Donald Borgen

My confirmation pastor, in 1952, was Clarence Hall. Both he and A.B. Walfred, who preceded Pastor Hall, did not need a microphone to be heard. Ralph Hanson and Everett Bexell were there in the late "50"s and early "60"s. Carl Beyerhelm was there when I was first elected to the church council. He was very intelligent and a bit political, but a very good pastor. They moved to Mediapolis so his daughter, Ruth, could play basketball on a state tournament team. She was a very good player. One incident in particular I remember with Pastor Beyerhelm was during a Sunday morning sermon. It was mid-March and the snow and ice was melting. Pastor said something about the wrath of God, pounding his fist on the pulpit, and a big chunk of ice came crashing down off the roof, kaboom, and we all laughed.

I was on the church council when we called Dean Sudman in 1977 to be Zion's pastor. He had previously served a Lutheran congregation in Little Rock, Arkansas. There was some discussion about Dean being the first non-Swede to serve our church. Before he arrived in Gowrie, the church decided to remodel the parsonage in 1977. The parsonage was built in 1910 for a Pastor who had ten children. Although I was chairman of the property committee, we were fortunate to have Dick Nordstrom, a local contractor, do the planning and complete this project.

I believe the entire project cost about \$76,000 and involved eliminating 31 windows and doors, new siding and roof. My wife Jean and I were the first wedding he presided over at Zion. Pastor Sudman was real active in our Community. He was one of the main proponents of the Gowrie Clinic. During his ministry, Zion began participating in the training of seminary interns. Under the guidance of Pastor Sudman, a new intern was called each year and this was continued by his successors. I believe at least sixteen interns participated in this program until 2000. We had both men and women interns, but Don Kreiss was an especially good male intern. He was a good singer and good with the youth, and a great comfort to my father-in-law when his wife passed away, Jennifer Ginn was excellent, especially in Bible study and teaching. Katherine Schifferdecker was also very good. Pastor Sudman served our church for about ten years.

Pastor Harris Hostager came, after Pastor Sudman, in 1988 and was here for five years. In 1988 the LCA church merged with the ALC. Pastor Hostager came from the American Lutheran-Norwegian tradition. He was a very good pastor, with a Norwegian sense of humor, as he liked to tell Sven and Ole jokes. When we had a farewell coffee for him, I wished him well and told him we would miss him, and his reply was that's what they said about the last guy". He went on to be an assistant to the Bishop in the Wisconsin Synod. Later, he retired to Minnesota.

Pastor Jim Knudson followed Pastor Harris Hostager coming to Zion in 1988. He was a small man physically, with a farm background. He and his wife Deb had two sons. Pastor Knudson and his wife will be remembered for their beautiful singing together. While he was here, Zion congregation decided to take on building project of improving and enclosing the front entrance and installing an elevator.

Pastor Jim Davis is our current pastor. (2015) He is very energetic, having participated in many marathon races. Since his arrival he developed the Countryside Ministry, which serves Fulton Lutheran at Roelyn, United Church of Christ at Moorland and Calvary Presbyterian at Barnum. We enjoy his ministry and he certainly is not perfect, but I think he is a good fit for our church. We are fortunate to have him.

The early church began at the Danielson School house near the Lost Grove Cemetery. A pastor from Dayton served the congregation. In 1871 they made a decision to move Gowrie and formed the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church grew and in 1877 they built a parsonage, then the first church building in 1880. Swedish services were held until the 1930's. Even today occasionally we have a hymn sung in Swedish. Music has always been great with a large choir and some first class organists and music directors. Some of the leaders of music were here for a long period. I remember Evelyn Thor, Margaret Tjaden, Karen Underwood, Almeda Gordon, Kathy Book, and Colleen Palmer. We are blessed with some young ladies that are very good with the piano and organ, such as Megan Eastman, Emma and Claire Davis and Mary Wahlgren. Bell choirs were started by Mrs. Palmer about 10 years ago. They are great.

After I was confirmed, I was promoted to usher. One of my first Sundays, Easter in the early '50's we had over 500 for a morning service. Today, we may have a little over 200 for Easter service. Church picnics were a big deal when I was a youth, with ball games, roller skating, horseshoe pitching, and other events. When I was real young, nine or ten, I remember Grandpa Larson buying ice cream for everyone. It was catered by Hasty's' Café of Gowrie and held at the Roland Township clubhouse in the summertime.

Luther League was a big deal for the youth also. I'm afraid it is almost non-existent today. We regularly had 40-50 kids in attendance. Homebuilders were a church group designed for young married couples to get together on Sunday night, for Bible Study, card games, food and fellowship. Zion Lutheran is an ELCA congregation. Some things we don't agree on, but overall it has been a good relationship. Besides being a great benevolent church, Zion has put over 20 sons and daughters into the Lutheran ministry. In my lifetime I remember Gerald Youngquist, Jim Carr, Lyle Peters, Luther Bexell, Joel Bexel, David Peterson, Barbara Lumblad, and Tyler Rasmussen. Our endowment fund gives out over \$20,000 every year to applicants that will help the world wide churches grow.

School: Elementary, High School, College, Extra credits

My school days started in 1944 as the youngest kid in a class of 23 kids in Gowrie Public School. Our teacher was Miss Donat, who later married a Gowrie boy, the janitor's son, Art Sigurdson. The only thing I really remember about kindergarten was a train ride from Gowrie to Farnhamville. My first grade teacher, I believe was Elaine Wahlgren, who married Max Palmer of Gowrie. She was a good teacher. In second grade our teacher was Rosemary Brownell, who married Marvin Telleen from Gowrie. She also was a good teacher. Miss Sebbie was the third grade teacher. She did not marry a Gowrie man. Fourth grade brought Miss Judge and she was not a good teacher. She was admonished by parents and administration, alike. My favorite elementary teacher was Marilyn Sundell who taught us in 5th grade and taught us in 6th grade as Marilyn Telleen, after she married Dale Telleen of Gowrie. She was a good classroom teacher and also participated in our church activities.

Junior High brought Ted Macur as our principal. He was strict and old military man, from World War II. He was a navigator on a bomber. Dick Chinberg was a teacher and coach for junior high girls. The girls loved him, but the boys not so much. By high school, everyone was physically maturing except me, because I was so young. I believe I was only 5' 4". By my Junior year, I had grown to 5' 11" and playing lots of basketball. We started a track program when I was a Junior. I was the captain of the track teams when I was a Senior. Our track and basketball coach was Ed Christian, who was 6' 9", but only 165 pounds. Our earlier coach in high school was Don Hugh. We had average athletic teams, nothing great, but I think we all enjoyed playing. I had five different English teachers in high school. Gladys Swenson was the typing teacher. Lucille Beeson, later Lucille Swanson, was Social Studies. Classmate, David Millard's dad, Percy, was our Drivers Ed teacher and shop. On the open road, Percy would ride the brake if you got over 45 mph. There were no turn signals in those days – hand signals only. We had a '54 Dodge from Soderbeck Chrysler dealership in Gowrie. During my freshman and sophomore years, my Ag teacher was Vernon Moore, who later went to work and became Vice President at Felco-Land-O-Lakes. I received a gold award for creed speaking. My junior-senior year, our teacher was Bob Lister. They were both good. I enjoyed them both.

I went out for band when I was a freshman, playing the trombone. We had a great teacher in Gail Royer. However, he was drafted by the military after one year of teaching. Later after military, he went onto national fame as a leader for the Gowrie Gauchos Drum & Bugle Corps. I believe he had a national champion at San Diego, California. A side-light with Mr. Royer, I believe he was the fastest typist I've ever seen. He was a neat individual.

My closest school friends were Gary Ehn and Bill Johnson. Gary moved to Gowrie with his parents, Elner and Gladys, when we were in 4th grade. Elner farmed south of Gowrie and was also a carpenter. Gladys was a teacher before they moved from the Pomeroy area. Gary and I enjoyed our bird hobby together. Gary is a very good artist. He now lives in Arkansas. Bill Johnson lived and worked on a farm about two miles east of Gowrie. We enjoyed each other, talking about our farming experiences. Bill had two sisters who were the same age as my two sisters. After the military, Bill farmed for about seven or eight years, before he went to work for the Boone Power Company. Bill and his wife, Brenda, still live in Boone. Bill is a great friend.

Our class of 1957 had to “tow the line”, as three of us had Dads on the school board, myself, Don Borgen, Jim McDonald, and David Millard’s dad being the principal – no secrets here. My Dad, Kenneth, served on the school board for 22 years, many of those years as board chairman. He gave all four members of my family their high school diploma at graduation. Dad and Mom were a great example for all of us.



Bill Grimes was the Gowrie Superintendent through 8th grade. He was from the old school, no nonsense, and tough disciplinarian. I remember him paddling three 8th grade boys when I was in 7th grade. A.C. Blome was the superintendent for my high school years. He was OK by me, but I remember some older boys throwing some dead jack rabbits and bags of weed seed on his front yard in east Gowrie. When we took our senior trip to Chicago, I ripped the crotch of my trousers and Mrs. Blome sewed it up when she found out. By the way, our class earned our senior trip to Chicago by picking up dropped ears of corn off the ground. BT corn was not yet here, so corn borers caused a lot of corn to fall to the ground. The whole class participated. Would they do that today? The senior trip was completely paid for by that class project. My school bus driver through all of my school years was Ross Plotner. He was a barber by trade and a World War I veteran. We filled the bus of 42 passengers in seven or eight miles.

High school was uneventful for me, besides Ag and sports kept me going as I really wanted to farm. The gifted ones were probably not challenged and the rest of us coasted along. I remember an individual who was always causing a disturbance in school, went on to get a doctorate degree and leadership at a major American company. I remember another time on a Monday morning when a classmate opened her desk top and a chicken flew out. Somebody had put the chicken in her desk over the weekend with an ear of corn. There was one egg there also. I can see Percy Millard throwing that chicken out the window. I believe all of us got restrictions because of that incident. Another time was when six or eight of the biggest boys picked up Gladys Swenson's Volkswagen and wedged it between two American elm trees in front of the school. I don't know how she got it out. One more event was one noon hour; we were waiting to get dismissed from the Ag building for lunch. Almost 20 of us were lined up by the door and somebody at the back started pushing, pretty soon everyone was going forward. We broke the door right out of the framework. I don't know who paid for that!

I have mentioned before that I was accident prone. Once on the playground when I was pretty young, I got hit in the head by a swing. At that time Dr. Borgen lived across from the school, so his wife, Helen, who was an R.N., took me in and Doc put stitches in my head. Other memories from high school were racing around in our dad's cars because only four or five boys could afford their own car. Don Borgen's dad had the best car. It was a '56 Buick Special. Boy that thing would fly. We always checked them out between all the railroad tracks that went through Gowrie at that time. My friend, Bill Johnson had a '49 Ford that was pretty good. Bill was kind of small for his age. I remember once Bill and I were going up to Twin Lakes just to check it out. Because there were no speed limits in those days, we were tooling along when we were pulled over. Bill always sat on a pillow to look bigger, but the patrolman didn't think he had a driver's license. Bill whipped out his license and we were on our way. School lunches were OK, but not exactly gourmet. Agnes Liljegren was in charge of lunch. Her husband, Vernon, was the school secretary and treasurer. Vernon was also a classmate of my Dad from 1923. They had one son, Bob, who was one year ahead of me in school. Bob had an infectious laugh. As school treasurer, Vernon knew where every nickel went and every pencil and paper was accounted for. They lived across the street from the Gowrie school building.

I believe when I graduated in 1957, Gowrie had 56 boys and 56 girls in high school. I was not prepared for college, but that was my fault for not taking college prep classes in high school. At Iowa State College, I struggled with chemistry and genetics, but I did well in the Ag classes, English and Social Studies, because that was along the line of my natural aptitude.

I wanted to farm after I finished high school, but there was no room for me with Dad and Bernard farming together. So I just did day labor for a year before I decided to go to college. I enrolled at Iowa State College in the fall of 1958 in the two year program for farm operators. Iowa State was then in the quarter system, three quarters in the school year. I remained at Iowa State for a total of four quarters obtaining about 62 hours of college credit. My advisor was Dr. Duane Acker, who later went on to be the President of Kansas State University. College was OK, but not in the big picture for me.

At Iowa State I roomed at Friley Hall for one quarter, but because of all the constant commotion in a dorm, I moved off campus to a big house next to the campus Methodist Church on Lincoln-way. Quite a few hometown friends were also living close to there, Bud Johanson, and Jon Lingren from Lanyon, brothers Don and Dean Owen from Somers. My roommate there was Dave Henderson from Tipton, IA. I didn't see much of him as he went to work at a bakery every morning at 3:00 a.m. Dale Bosch from Gowrie was also living in our house. Dale helped me with difficult schoolwork. We ate lunch about every day at the campus town café. A big tenderloin and drink was only 50 cents. My first taste of pizza was at Shakeys' Pizza on Lincoln-way. I did a lot of walking at Iowa State. The first winter I had a class all the way across campus, over a mile, in January by 8:00 in the morning. I had my '52 Chevy at college, but of course you couldn't drive on the campus. The first spring quarter I sprained my ankle playing ball and got a special permit to drive on campus. I played intramural basketball. One of my teammates was Merrill Oster, the founder of the Pro Farmer Organization. One quarter I took swimming lessons. To my surprise the all male class did not need swim trunks, true story. The biggest (non-school) event, besides VIESHA, I believe was in early April 1960. That April night we had a wet, heavy snow. We lived off campus right across from the college football field. A bunch of guys started rolling up a huge snow ball on the football field. This snow ball got to be 15-20 feet tall and they rolled it out onto Highway 30. I could see trucks and cars backed up through campus town and beyond. Finally the city brought a huge end loader to bust up and remove the snowball. Of course all the students were cheering and jumping up and down. Another event was a panty raid on the girls' dorm. I believe the top quarter-back and a few of his friends were caught in the act. The VIESHA celebration every spring was an excuse for me to come home and help Dad with the farming.

The highlight for me was being a student manager for the varsity basketball team. I stumbled into that job as I was returning from class one day. I stopped by the old armory gym to watch them practice. Tom Goodale, the only manager, asked me if I wanted a job and I said, "Why not?" The rest is history. The coach then was Bill Strannigan who took a job at his alma mater in Wyoming the next year. Glenn Anderson took his place the second year I was there. On the roster, over half were from the state of Iowa, but our best player, Vinnie Brewer, was from New York City as were two other players, Henry Whitney and Nick Bruno. Being a little kid from Gowrie, IA, I had never seen anybody up close dunk the ball. Henry was very good at this with large hands. I made the mistake of betting him he couldn't do two balls at the same time. I lost that bet.



Iowa State 'Big 8' Champions 1960

We traveled with the team all over the “Big 8” territory, including the Kansas City tournaments. My roommate on some of these trips was Dale Williams, the WOI radio broadcaster, who was also the farm guy for WOI. He had a contagious laugh and I enjoyed his company. One night the scoreboard operator was sick, so I filled in, running the scoreboard. It was a non-conference game, but it was kind of nerve wracking. Our big man was Terry Roberts from Webster City. He was 6’ 11”. He needed a bigger bed on road trips and a seat to himself on the team bus. My manager experience was great. I’m glad I had the opportunity.

I received extra credits since college taking short courses, such as CCA, Certified Crop Advisor. I learned how to weld by taking a night class in the Ag building at Gowrie and also, by one summer camp at Tooele, Utah with the National Guard in a civil service shop on base.

Military: Draft, Iowa National Guard, Training

In 1960 my military draft number came within, four, of being called up, so I enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard. I was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for basic training on November 20, 1960 with my friend, Bob George, from Fort Dodge. This was the melting pot of society for young men. We had men from the mid-west, deep south, and west taking basic training for eight weeks. We were farmers, teachers, gas station operators, college drop-outs, black and white, large and small. I remember one little red-head from Oklahoma, after he got his head shaved, they found out he was only 15, they sent him home. Basic was tough. I was glad I was young and in relatively good shape. Most days started at four a.m. and went to 10 p.m. We had frequent inspections for our barracks and foot lockers. We had a weapons inspection one night at midnight. Any trace of dirt in or on your rifle and you disassembled it and started over. We had gas mask training with tear gas. If you didn't get your mask on in time, you suffered. On the hand-grenade range I remember a soldier had a panic attack as he pulled the pin, and the sergeant rushed over and threw the grenade over a concrete wall. Night training was nerve wracking as we crawled on our bellies with tracer ammo 42 inches over our heads. We slept in a sleeping bag in ten degree weather with our M1 in the bag. My platoon sergeant was Sgt. Mack Giles, a black man. He was certainly "spit and polish". He had also served with the Honor Guard at Arlington National Cemetery. He was a neat man. We had a lot of respect for him. Our first sergeant was a lot tougher. His name was Field First Sergeant Mamoru Ekimura. He had three purple hearts from Korea and other battles. He also had a black belt in Karate. You gave him no s*** and when he barked, you jumped. I saw him kick men in the back of their legs if they got out of step marching. We all had our share of KP duty and guard duty. One cold January night, I fell asleep in a warm furnace room while on guard duty, so I received three straight days of KP (kitchen police). After basic training, things got much better as we trained for our eventual duties back home, like vehicle maintenance. We pretty much worked about 8-5 every day learning basic maintenance and safety.



1960-1961

Table of Contents

During basic I had become friends with Paul Isaacson of Callao, Missouri. He was also a farmer. I went home for the week-end a couple of times with him. He was married to Linda. She was a beautician at the time. Paul is retired and now lives in Macon, MO. I didn't mention that we were not allowed off the base during basic training for eight weeks. I also should add that cold, wet December, in the old coal-fired barracks, 42 out of 105 A Company soldiers went to the infirmary with a cold or bronchitis. I was discharged from six months active duty on May 20, 1961 and came home to help dad finish corn planting. I still had a 5 1/2 year obligation to the Iowa Guard.

I was part of the 234th Transportation unit out of Fort Dodge, Iowa. Our facility was just south of the Fort Dodge airport. We had week-end meetings once a month and a two week active duty summer camp. Our company commander was Captain Herb Conlon (later mayor of Fort Dodge). Our first sergeant was Jim Dawson and our motor pool sergeant was Jim Smith. I was promoted to Specialist 5th Class in about a year and a half, equivalent of a sergeant.

Our week-end drills were pretty boring or repetitious, but our summer camps were more interesting and variable. The first three summers were at Camp Ripley, MN, near Little Falls. Our company had a nasty reputation of being big beer drinkers – which I am not. One weekend the boys brought back from Little Falls a ¾ ton truck so full of beer the driver could hardly get behind the wheel. A good time enjoyed by all. The first year there I was driving an APC (armored personnel carrier) and another APC and I started racing. They would do about 45 mph. We weren't watching where we were going and ended up in a swamp with our track full of weeds and cattails. We got out OK, but we spent the next 3-4 hours cleaning out tracks. On a better situation I was picked by the battalion Commander, a full colonel, to drive and care for his personal jeep the entire two weeks. He loved to stop at any available Dairy Queen, which was great duty. His jeep was the best and fastest in the motor pool.

I believe the fourth year they flew the entire unit to Tooele, Utah. This was a civilian camp where they trained military personnel in all kinds of shop work. Two of us spent most of the time with one guy teaching welding and on acetylene cutting. It was a rough flight out. I remember several guys getting sick. On our weekend off there, I remember going to a night club and seeing Wayne Newton sing and other entertainers. The last two summer camps were at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. Our home company had been changed quite a bit. We were now an ammo support company. Here at Camp McCoy two of us were assigned to run D-8 Cats, building ammo mounds or dump. This was great duty, but we got awfully dirty every day on those open Cats. At home we never had much serious duty. In the spring floods of 1965 we had flood duty in north Fort Dodge. We were there for crowd control and prevent any looting. I remember Sergeant Dawson stepping into some ones pool that was covered with flood water. We rescued him. Another local job was clearing some trees at Kennedy Park before it was Kennedy Park. We had two guys in our unit that were really good with heavy equipment because that is what they did in civilian life, Bob Pederson of Badger and Conrad Clark of Fort Dodge. Unlike today with the Guard being called up on a whim, we were never confronted with that decision. By the way, my first monthly paycheck was \$72.00. After six years of duty, I was discharged on September 20, 1966. My military experience taught me the value of discipline and self-respect.

Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

SPECIALIST FIVE(E-5) DONALD K. LARSON, NG26805217, 3657th Ord Co(Ammo)(DS)(-)

was Honorably Discharged from the **ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF**

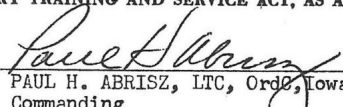
Iowa

AND AS A RESERVE OF THE ARMY

on the 20th *day of* September, 1966

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

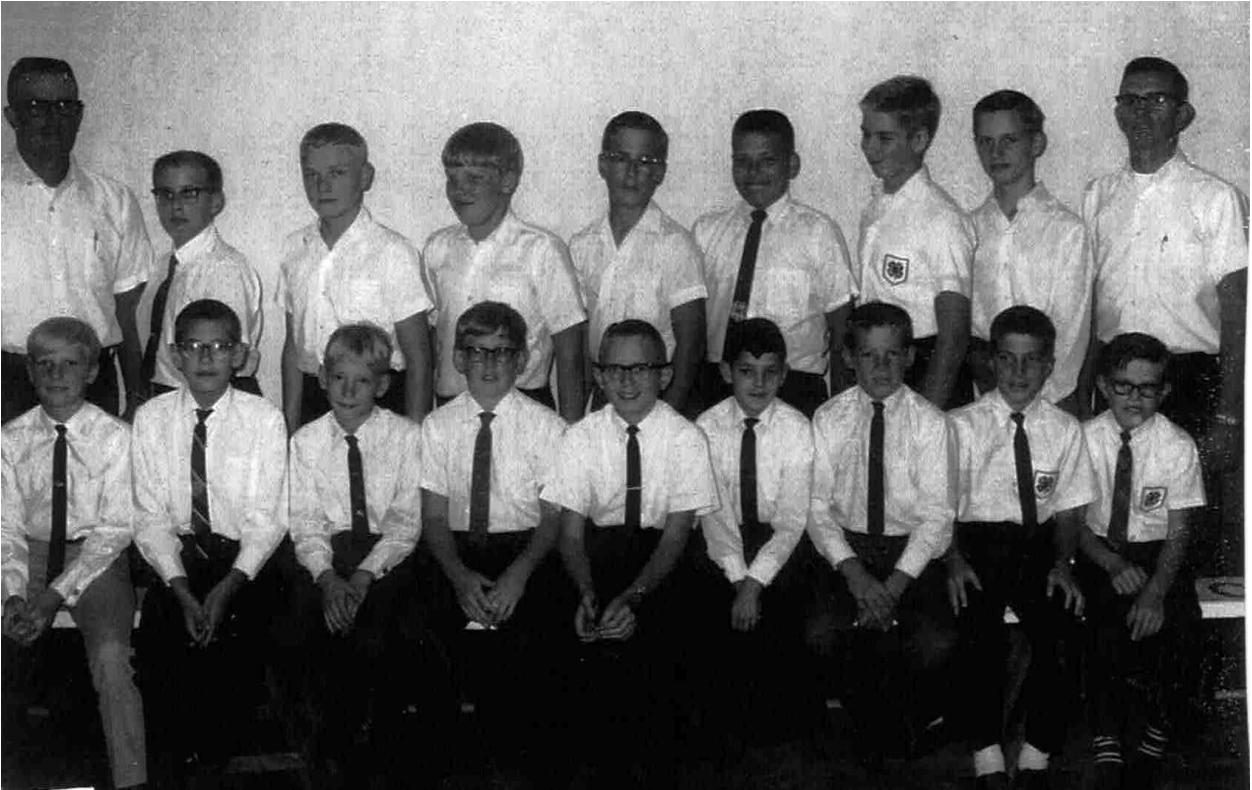
THIS DISCHARGE DOES NOT RELIEVE THE INDIVIDUAL NAMED HEREIN FROM ANY RESERVE OBLIGATION TO WHICH HE MAY BE SUBJECT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING AND SERVICE ACT, AS AMENDED


PAUL H. ABRISZ, LTC, Ord Co, Iowa ARNG
Commanding

NGB FORM 55
1 JULY 59

REPLACES NGB FORM 55 DATED 1 JAN 53, WHICH IS OBSOLETE

Public Service: 4-H, Township, Fire Board, Coop Board



Clay Champions 4-H Club 1960

The Clay Champions 4-H Club was started in 1950 by Bob Gustafson and Herb Lee. 4-H was a big part of my life from the age of ten to seventeen. We had good leaders and a great group of boys. Later we accepted two girls into the club. They were Joyce and Janet Thompson who lived on the old Alliger farm. Bob Gustafson and his wife, Sarah, had three boys; Roland, Richard and Roger. Roland and I grew to be great friends before he came to an untimely death at 57, due to complications of diabetes. Jim Greenfield and I took a demonstration to the Iowa State Fair in the early 50's. We received a blue ribbon, thanks to Paul Greenfield, who was Jim's dad. We, as a group, built a small air compressor from an old wash machine motor. Our club showed over thirty calves every year at the county fair. We also, received the herdsmanship award for the entire fair for ten straight years. This was given to the club with the neatest area and animals, plus some one present to visit with people. We also had a pancake supper for our families every Christmas at the Lundgren Church. We held our monthly meetings at the old Clay Center country school house. Herb and Bonnie Lee had no children, but they were a great pair to help us out. We had an annual tour to everyone's farm to view the animals going to the fair. The Webster County Fairgrounds was then located where Iowa Central College now is located. Always something unexpected happened at the county fair. One time a young boy was washing his animal with cold water on a very hot day. The calf died on the spot. Another time, a calf got loose and was finally rounded up in north Fort Dodge. Two or three years after I left 4-H as a member, I was asked by Norman Anderson to be a leader. So Roland Gustafson and I as young as we were now the leaders for the Clay Champions 4-H Club. I believe we did this for four or five years. It was a challenge as times were changing and

we had no formal training for this job. We did have some very good kids and support from their families. We had club tours to Fort Dodge to various industries. I am still a supporter of the Webster County 4-H Foundation. I count many friends from my 4-H experience. Roland was always the same, despite the pain and problems with severe diabetes. He was intelligent, humble and just a good human being. Another important leader in the 4-H organization was Earl Henderson. He was enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He was a banker and community leader. In 1958, Sharon Sandell, Kay Peterson, Dale Miller and I were named the outstanding 4-Her's in Webster County and were awarded a trip to Chicago. Our escorts were Paul Harms and Verla Ulish who were the Extension Service counselors for 4-H in Webster County. We had a great time, and I count Dale Miller as one of my best friends to this day. DeWayne Fiala was a long term leader in Clay Township for many years. Many clubs have now merged together.

I have done a large amount of public service in my life. My dad was always involved in our community, so I guess I thought it was my turn. The progression of these boards is in no particular order, mostly in the 70's and 80's. I was on the church board I believe a total of three terms. The first was under Pastor Beyerhelm. The board was about 17 or 18 members, too big for a good discussion. Pastor B always started the meetings with a reading or prayer from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor from Germany, who was imprisoned and killed by the Nazis in World War II. Pastor B was very intelligent and a bit political. He was once a missionary and refused to take a raise in the three years I was on the board. There was a heated discussion one year about board members serving after they divorced. Two of us were affected by this argument. The Iowa Synod Bishop came to Gowrie and chastised everyone who thought that divorced people should not serve on the church council. Enough said - move on. My next term on Zion Church council was in 2001. Pastor Jim Davis came to Zion in 2001. He was younger and more enthusiastic than our previous pastors. Pastor Davis and the council started the Country-side Ministry, which involved pastoral care for Faith Lutheran, Harcourt; Trinity Lutheran, Boxholm; Fulton Lutheran, Roelyn; United Church of Christ, Moorland; Calvary Presbyterian, Barnum. Pastor Rod Meyer was assisting Pastor Davis at Harcourt and Boxholm and with the youth. However after some discussion and disagreement, Harcourt and Boxholm took Pastor Meyer as their Pastor. Our council was much smaller than the "old days". I believe about eight members. We had some good ideas and discussion with this group. My last three year term, I served as chairman. Pastor Davis was easy to work with and open to new ideas. He is our first pastor that is really computer literate. Church council was a good experience.

In the 1960's, Andy Anderson of Gowrie came by and asked me to take his place on the Webster County draft board. Yes, you younger folks don't realize there was selective service mandate requiring military service if you qualified. This was a tough job, because it was during the Vietnam conflict. Our board chair was Albert Habhab, the Fort Dodge mayor. Our secretary was Joyce Lott. We had to read many exemptions and letters from prospective recruits. I initialed many papers during this time. The selective service was phased out shortly after this, due to many objections to Vietnam.

The next board I was privileged to serve on was the Webster County Cattlemen. We were a very active organization in the 70's and 80's. Tracey Stoner was our president when I started. Tracey was a large farmer and cattleman, who lived just one mile north of me. When one of his hired men decided to move on, I was asked to take his place on the board. We were very active

at fairs, parades and cook-outs. One of the first Frontier Day celebrations at Fort Dodge, we grilled over 5,000 hamburgers. At another event we grilled about 400 rib-eye steaks. In the mid 70's, we managed to get Earl Butz, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, to Fort Dodge to speak at our annual banquet. Over 1,100 tickets were sold for Starlite. His famous loaf of bread analysis went over real big. We also, had a great group of ladies doing events to promote beef. Some of the people that I served with were Tracey Stoner, Roger Schulze, Dana Hotz, Jim Witte, Steve Schmalenberger, DeWayne Fiala, Beryl Birkland, Jerry Galloway, Henry Rathouz, Chris Fevold, John B. Fevold, and Val Lind. The women were Barb Schulze, Janice Stoner, Edna Fiala, Helen Rathouz, Marilyn Birkland, Marilyn Anderson, Janet Galloway, Sharon Carlson, my wife, Jean and many others. As the farm crisis deepened in the early 80's, many of us were forced to cut back or get out of the cattle business. The Webster County Cattlemen still exists today on a much smaller basis.

The following is a speech I gave on Feb. 3, 1986 at the Webster County Cattlemen's banquet.

"Dear Friends, as I near the end of my four years on this board I feel I should make a few comments. I was asked about four years ago to take Ray Braziers place on this board. Like everybody, I was reluctant to take another job as I was already on about three other boards at the time. However, I did accept and am grateful to have served this organization. I can sincerely say I have never served with a nicer group of people. We have all had common interests and goals and a lot of fun doing it. A lot of change has occurred in four years. This county has gone from over 20,000 cattle fed annually in the late 70's to much less than a 1,000 today. The cow herds have diminished also. This of course is not the fault of this organization, the ICA, but government interruption, interest rates, also, media exaggeration of certain factors in beef production and to changing consumer tastes. I am hopeful beef consumption has bottomed out and will come back soon. Please vote for the beef check-off at our county extension office on February 18th. I think along with our cattle organization, the beef retailers are starting some excellent programs to promote beef. I think if the beef industry does not recover some in this immediate area, you will be consolidating county boards like ours, with other counties or just having district boards. The cattle business is very unique because it is so independent in the private feed lots and cow herds. It is undoubtedly part of our problem. It is hard to change, but change we will and hopefully the changes will be good for us all.

I was not going to thank individuals, but I want to do some and I know I'll miss some but here goes. I'd like to thank the current board members for their super help this year. To past directors like Jim Witte, Tracey Stoner, Bruce Lambert, Beryl Birkland, Glen Stevens, Steve Schmalenberger, Emmitt Ascherel, Tom Bunda, DeWayne Fiala and to Roger Schulze who is going back on the board this year. Also, to Roger's wife, Barb and Nancy Schmalenberger and the current Cowbelle directors. We have been really blest with a sharp bunch of ladies in this county. People like Helen Rathouz, Sharon Carlson, Janice Stoner, Julie Lundgren, Marilyn Anderson and Edna Fiala, our current director on the District 8 Cowbells and many others who have done a super job selling our good product every year. A special thanks to Judy Reynolds of the extension office for very efficient work in printing our programs tonight and every year and for sending out meeting notices on two or three days' notice when your president is not on the ball. Also, Bill Coffee, our current extension director who is a former cow-calf man himself. To John Lizer for his help here at the annual meeting, as well as the County Fair and the use of his sale barn for beef shows and the 4-Hweigh-in. To Drs Rohdes and Hubbard and

Stockman's' Supply and all the vets in the area. People like all of these make for a strong organization. A big Thank You to all who have helped the Webster County Cattlemen.

As I reach another personal cross-road in my life with my farm sale next Tuesday, I reflect on all the good times in my twenty-five years of farming and especially the cattle business. Where I have gone from basket and scoop shovel and feeding a load of cattle a year to feeding over 800 head a year with a remix scale wagon and sophisticated feed-testing program, to custom feeding, to completely out of cattle feeding, it has indeed been a lot changes. I can remember as a small boy my Dad hauling corn bundles on a flat rack up to the silo for cutting and blowing, to filling a 20 x 80 silo in little more than a day with modern equipment. Sure there have been problems, I always cussed the old unloader, it never quit unless it was twenty below and the blower always plugged when you wanted to quit early and go the ballgame. Just when you thought you had new cattle acclimated and treated for everything, they came down with a new disease. When the cattle buyer drove out the gate and had just stolen your cattle for a buck less than you thought they were worth. Like when you dropped off the concrete with the feed wagon or the loader in the middle of March with no bottom in the lots. But the rewards out-weighed it all. Like smelling fresh-mown hay, seeing 200 head of cattle lined up at the bunk contentedly eating the best ration man can put in front of them, also having cattle yield over 64% and gain over three pounds a day. I'm sure the cow-calf man has similar pleasures of seeing a healthy new-born calf nurse its mother for the first time or romp around the pasture.

I have no regrets or apologies for having been a farmer and a cattle feeder all these years. I am disappointed in the way some things have gone, but I know I live in a great country that still has great opportunities. With faith in God and each other this country will remain good and great, but we cannot stand back and be complacent about this. We must stand up on the issues of the day, believe in ourselves, and spend more time with our families. As my father, Kenneth, stated in a letter about our Century Farm recently, "We owe a lot to the pioneers who settled this area." They also had many problems to over-come, but if we can retain some of our ancestors determinations and other strong qualities, what more can anyone ask.

We move ahead with excitement about today and tomorrow and not worry about yesterday. Thank you for letting me serve this organization and letting me air out my thoughts tonight. Thank you."

One of the first community jobs I had was that as a trustee of Clay Township. When Dad and Mom moved to Gowrie in 1978, I became the third generation of Larsons to serve in this capacity. Grandpa Warner started in the 1920's. The trustees are a small group, usually three with a clerk, also. The original group approved the tax rates and took care of any disputes. They were also responsible for maintaining the Clay Center School. We usually meet just once a year unless a major decision has to be made. As part of this trustee job, one sort of automatically gets on the Callender Cemetery Board which also meets once a year. They are responsible for the care and maintenance of the large Callender cemetery which is in Clay Township. Also, two other small cemeteries located in the Callender area. Members on this board are from Clay and Roland Townships and the town of Callender. Walt Peterson, now deceased was our excellent, long term chairman. He was an insurance man at Callender. The current trustees in Clay are Allan Wicklein, Dave Carlon and I. Our clerk is Marsha Samuelson.

My next board to serve on was the Prairie Fire Board #1 which serves an area of Lost Grove and Clay Townships. Again, a neighbor, Martin Telleen, asked me to take his place when his health failed. It is also a small board. There are currently three of us, Nik Telleen, Don Rasmussen, and myself. We have the responsibility of a tax levy to help fire protection for rural residents. By law, we can only levy so much. Two members of this group meet with the Gowrie Fire Board on a regular basis to determine the needs of the district. Currently, Don Rasmussen and Nik Telleen are on the Fire Dept. Board.

The most important board I have served on was the Consolidated Coop elevator board at Gowrie. I believe I served a total of nine years. The last three years as chairman of the board. It was a 30 million dollar business, involving membership at Gowrie, Harcourt, Callender, Palm Grove and Paton. At first we have a large board of about eighteen, later it was reduced to around eight or nine. George Reko was the first manager. George was from the old school, a chain smoker to boot. Our finance manager was Paul Culver, who later went to Farmland in Kansas City. We bought and sold grain, petroleum and fertilizer and related products farmers needed. Our big deal, early, was we tried to bring an ethanol plant to Gowrie. I believe we started the project in 1978. We bought forty acres of land from Bruntlett Farms, hired an engineer, and made several trips to Washington D.C. This was to be a ten million gallon plant just east of Gowrie. This was a tough project to begin with. We had two major setbacks. Our first engineer died of a heart attack at 40 years old. Our government guaranteed loan of 24 million dollars was cancelled by the Reagan administration in 1980-1981. The management worked hard on this project and our board backed the proposal. We were probably ahead of our time, but the project eventually died, costing the coop over \$400,000. Because of this and other losses, we had to partner with Farmers Coop of Farnhamville in our fertilizer facility, two miles east of Gowrie. Later this fertilizer plant was sold to Farmers Coop. Our big profit center was petroleum, especially LP which came originally from the Big Four Coop at Callender. We sold millions of gallons of LP, both locally and wholesale. Our major supplier was the Waterloo Service Company of Waterloo, IA. I served on the Waterloo Board for three years. Times were tough through the 80's. We brought on a new manager in the late 80's. His name was Alan Kohtz from Nebraska. He came to us highly recommended and did have some good ideas. At that time I was chairman of the board, so I was really disappointed when Alan came to my farm and said he was resigning to take a job with a large coop in Indiana. I believe he was only in Gowrie two or three years, but opportunity was there for him, so we immediately began a search for an interim manager. Francis Voight was hired for this position. We were already talking about sharing or merging with another coop. We had meetings (I had 44 meetings the last year) we talked with NEW Coop at Fort Dodge, Farmers Coop of Farnhamville and West Central at Ralston. We chose West Central because of equity distribution.

The last fall (1994) we were in business, a terrible explosion occurred at our Gowrie terminal in the middle of the night, as our employees were transferring grain from our branches to the Gowrie terminal. A young lady operating the terminal was killed and a truck driver severely injured. The force of this was unbelievable. Of course the media and insurance people were all over this. I believe it was later determined the grain leg was faulty and ignited grain dust. NEW and FC Coops helped us take care of incoming grain, because this occurred in the middle of harvest. This was not the end of the story. As repairmen were working to repair the huge hole at the top of the elevator, a young father fell to his death, because he was not wearing a safety

harness. I was greatly relieved when the membership approved the merger with West Central Members of our board at our closing were myself, Jim Wiley, Paul Kehoe, Lyle Blair, Chuck Christianson, and Jim Stewart.



*Tractor Pull Ad
Gowrie*

My most enjoyable adventure as chairman was promoting and conducting the 4th of July Tractor Pull at Gowrie from 1970 - 1977. I had always been interested in pulling tractors since 1963 at the Iowa State Fair. Actually two neighbors thought this would be a good way to promote the Gowrie 4th celebration. Both Dick Larsen and Martin Telleen thought it was a good idea, and my knowledge of the rules and organization would be a big plus. I had already had many friends that were tractor pulling or involved in some way. My good friend, Greg Schmadeke and I knew how to build a good hard track for pulling. After all our pulls, the operators commented what a great track we had at Gowrie. The Iowa Pullers had their own organization for governing pull operators. As horsepower increased every year, the rules were being updated every year for safety reasons. The object of a tractor pull is to pull a weight-transfer sled over a measured track. The real early people did not have the weight-transfer, just

men jumping on a sled every so often. Certainly after some accidents, the weight-transfer sled was designed. We had as many as 5,000 people at our Gowrie Pull, with dozens of tractors participating. Later pick-up trucks also wanted to pull the sled. We had Don Warren of WHO radio in Des Moines as our track announcer. We held the pull on a prepared track just south of the old baseball park in Gowrie. The last one in 1977 was held just south of the business district at Brockett Park. All tractors were carefully weighed and inspected by a member of the Iowa Association. The last pull we had 212 entries. The Gowrie Pull was sponsored by the American Legion Post #431. As everyone was getting older, insurance and other expenses were getting higher, they wanted to discontinue after 1977.



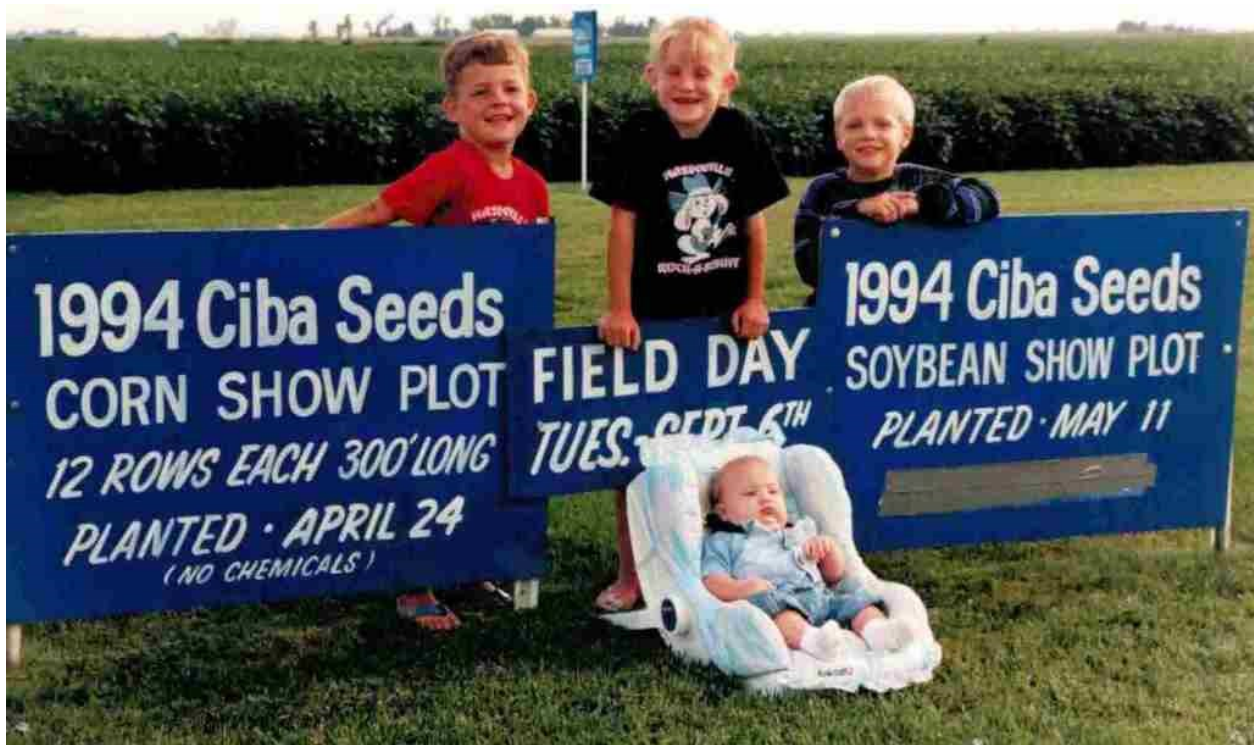
Tractor Pull

I was a director on the Iowa Board from 1976-1978. One summer we went to over 50 pulls, including Louisville, KY, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Ft. Worth. Many pulls in Iowa were classic like Hinton, Boone, Kalona, and Bloomfield and of course the Iowa State Fair and Spencer Fair. The Gowrie Fire Department now sponsors a big tractor pull at the Webster County fairgrounds in Fort Dodge every July. It has got to be a very expensive for pullers and sponsors alike. Some of the multi-engine modified tractors have over 10,000 horsepower! Vaughn Bauer of Paton builds the certified pulling sleds used in America and overseas. I

believe Vaughn has built over 20 of these, all very sophisticated. Pulling has come a long way.

I am also currently on the Gowrie Historical Society. We try to maintain the history of our area and we have the old railroad depot to house our artifacts. We are getting older which is good to provide information and ideas for our organization. We meet three or four times a year, and we have an open house on the Gowrie 4th of July.

Seed Business: 1974 on, Companies, Trips



Grandkids at Field Day '94

Front: Brett

Back (left to right) Michael, Jenna, Trevor

When I started farming, the last thing I thought I would do would be selling seed corn and soybeans. I had a lot of respect for the existing seed dealers in our area, like Garland Hanson and Warren Schmadeke of Callender and Dick Brennan of Fort Dodge. In the winter of 1973 - 74, I went to a Funks G seed meeting in Fort Dodge. After the meeting, they were asking for new dealers in our area. When I got home, two neighbors, Harold Orness and Jack Burnett, sweet-talked me into taking a dealership. I was signed up by Don Johnson of Jefferson for just Clay Township. Funks G was an old seed company founded by the Funk Brothers of Belle Plaine, IA and Bloomington, IL. The very first year, southern corn leaf blight hit the corn industry. As luck would have it, Funks corn was not affected by this blight. The first year, I sold over 400 bags. It was downhill for about ten years after that. The reason for this was Funks G was sold first to a "Can" Corporation and then to Ciba Geigy. The people in charge bled the company down financially and had less research and new products. I also had two more different managers in those 10 years. In 1985, Larry Barth of Ames became my new field sales manager for Ciba Seed sales. Larry was a native of the Sioux City area with a farm background. He had already had experience with a smaller seed company. Larry and I are still working together in 2015, but he is going to retire this summer. About 1995 Ciba Geigy merged with Sandoz, all Swiss companies, to form Syngenta or NK. NK let Larry Barth go and Kurt Siever was my new seed man. Kurt was real aggressive and pushed for new ideas and progress. One

great thing that happened to me with NK is I started writing my own newsletter. I believe I have written over 180 different newsletters at this point. I found out this is a much better way to keep in touch with customers than driving up and down the road every day. However, you still need personal contact with the farmer or farm manager to sell your product. I send letters to about 100 people every month. After three or four years with NK, I became disillusioned and again hooked up with Larry Barth. Larry had connected with Great Lakes Hybrids of Ovid, MI. Great Lakes is part of the Ag Reliant Company of Westfield, IN, and parent company KW in Germany. That is our main corn company to this day. They have high-quality products for our area. Before this change I was looking for another company for quality and lower priced soybeans. I had already bought some seed beans from Dennis Ewing who represented the Kruger Seed Company of Dike, IA. Dennis was very knowledgeable and personal on corn and bean seed. This started about 10 or 12 years dealership for Kruger Seed. Eventually, Dennis moved up to a top position at Kruger and Scott Broedser was my new man. I eventually sold thousands of bags of Kruger soybeans.



Field Day September '99

In our seed business, we started a large “Field Day” every fall after Labor Day to showcase the products we were selling and an opportunity to talk to company representatives and extension people. From 1994 to 2014 we averaged 140 people here to enjoy a meal and visit with each other. My wife Jean lined up the help and fixed desserts. Our main meal was catered by different groups like the Webster County Cattlemen, Jason Stanek, Hickory House restaurant of Fort Dodge, and Hy-Vee. For several years we were also entertained by powered parachutes. The lead man for this was Dennis Mills of Cedar Falls. He was also associated with Kruger Seed of Dike. One year Denny had three of his friends flying here including Don Sandell of Burnside, Steve Rosenbloom of Pomeroy, and Bill Yewell of Ogden. Powered parachutes are just that, about a 22’ wide parachute type wing, powered by a Honda engine propeller. They only need a few 100 feet to take off and cruise over the country-side at 20-25 M.P.H. at a few hundred feet altitude. I have flown with Don Sandell, It is a great crop scouting tool. These men

did a great job of entertaining the kids and adults. A fun time indeed!



Field Day 2001 Powered Parachute

About the time I parted with NK, I needed some good corn products. Golden Harvest in Nebraska had some promising new hybrids. John Krausman of Pomeroy was a district sales manager. We sold their products for about three years. After we started selling Kruger, I had a chance to diversify even more with Prairie Brand beans of Story City, IA. Kevin Vaudt of Rembrandt, IA covered the western half of Iowa. He was a great salesman and is still helping me today. Prairie Brand was originally owned by the Sandsgaard family of Story City and is now owned by Dow-Mycogen. In 2007 I sold 7,500 bags of soybeans for Prairie Brand. Dennis Ewing eventually left Kruger Seed and formed his own company with Tom Thompson of Thompson, IA. The new company was called NuTech and was based in Ames, Ia. Later on they sold NuTech to DuPont-Pioneer. I still am a dealer for NuTech and Scott Broesder is my supervisor. They have high quality products. I am also a dealer for Williams Lawn Seed Products out of Maryville, MO.

The seed business is now a large scale, professional business, with pro-dealers offering a large variety of services. I have come a long way also. I first started storing seed in an old barn by hand. We did all the book-work by hand. Now we have a modern building, all concrete, bulk seed, conveyor, and a new fork-lift. I have a computer software system called SMS where I can keep track of all inventory, invoices, and other accounts in seconds on the computer. I am now

partnering with a large farmer dealer to get even better discounts for my customers. I have never been a large dealer, but I think keep track of the seed industry pretty well.

A side-line to the seed business is my dealership with Precision Planting of Tremont, IL. I had some customers, one in particular, who always wanted medium-round seed which in nature is not always possible. Precision Planting had developed some new seed meters that would accurately plant any size seed. They were called E-SETS and V-SETS. These units could be put on any planter with great success. Greg Sauder and his family started Precision and hired top-notch engineers. Greg is also a large farmer in Illinois, so he could try a lot of these products on his farm, perfecting them along the way. They developed many other products for accurate, trouble free planting. The Sauder family sold the company to Monsanto in 2013. With the additional resources they are on the cutting edge of technology. They have a summer and winter conference every year at Tremont. Brandon King of BK Acres at Boone is the lead man in Iowa for them and installed five different items on my personal planter.

One of the perks of having a successful seed business, are the trips offered by seed companies. My wife Jean and I have been on 23 major trips since 1990. Many of these trips were outside of the United States. My first one in 1989 was to New Orleans, Louisiana with Ciba-Geigy. I believe it was for dealers who had sold over 1,000 bags of seed corn. We were part of the "Trail Blazer" Club and were recipients of a nice dress jacket by the president of the company. We were lodged near where the Mississippi enters the Gulf of Mexico. I remember the fresh seafood buffets with wonderful fish, oysters, clams, shrimp and other "fresh" sea food. There were about 74 top dealers at this event. In 1990, Ciba-Geigy took us to Chicago for another "Trail Blazer" meeting. The high-light of this trip was visiting Mike Ditka's restaurant and shaking hands with Mike Ditka. My, he had huge hands. For you non-football people, Ditka was an all-pro football player with the Chicago Bears. The steaks were delicious at the Ditka Restaurant.

In the winter of 1990, we went to the Bahamas' courtesy of Ciba-Geigy. This was the first time I had seen traffic driving on the "wrong" side of the street, Great Britain style. I remember the clear blue water, scuba-diving, and parasailing-sailing, and of course wonderful restaurants and gourmet food. It was a really neat experience.

In 1991, the dealers went to Melbourne, Florida. I went on this trip with Horace Lantz and Don Greene. The ocean experience was great and it was fabulous weather in January. The bummer of this trip was when we returned to the Des Moines airport at 1:00 a.m., Don Greene, who had brought us there, had a flat on his van, frozen square by the below zero temperatures. We found an all-night station and got it fixed. A short night!

Later in 1991, Ciba-Geigy took us to San Francisco and Lake Tahoe. I remember the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz and the hilly streets. A memorable side-light was on the way to Lake Tahoe, we stopped at Sacramento to see the big train museum. We saw the old steam engines up to the cross-country streamliners. At Lake Tahoe, we had choices of skiing, resting, and of course the casino. I remember one of our executives winning \$2,500 at a table game and the house would not pay him until the next day.

In 1992 as my first trip with Ciba instead of Ciba-Geigy, We were in Minneapolis for a sales

meeting. Again in 1993, Ciba flew us to New Orleans. This was similar to my first trip to New Orleans, except I received a “Pacemaker” jacket for increasing my sales.

In 1995, we received our first trip out of the country to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. We were at a beautiful resort. This was a Ciba trip. In 1996 we were in Omaha for a sales meeting with Ciba. In 1999 we were back at Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Kruger seed this time. We had a great time at the resort. We witnessed a bull fight for the first and last time. Being a farmer, I thought it was pretty gory. We also, got out in the country, away from the resort and saw how the rural people live. Five farmers shared a JD 3020 gas tractor. They were also planting melon seed in a furrow made by a walking plow, pulled by a horse. One farmer had one sow in a little pen by his house. There was a third world atmosphere in areas of Puerto Vallarta. We visited a church in Puerto Vallarta and there were small children begging us to buy gum and trinkets. On the streets there were older cars and pickups with dented fenders. I swear I we saw twenty people riding in the back of an S-10 pick-up truck. At the resort we rode in a catamaran tour boat around the bay. They stopped by a huge rock and some people went snorkeling, but the water was so rough and the boat was rocking and Jean became sea sick. It was an interesting, good all-around trip. Also in 1999, when I started with Great Lakes, they flew me to company headquarters at Ovid, Michigan to tour the plant and meet the company president, Mike Stephenson. Great Lakes Seed Co was started in 1925 by five farmers.

The year, 2000, brought our first cruise in the Caribbean with Kruger Seed. This was a real neat adventure. I never got sea-sick, but Jean took some anti-nausea pills. We stopped at three different islands. On St. Croix we toured a rum factory. It is a beautiful tropical island where Columbus landed in 1492. It has been ruled through the years by Spain, England, Holland, France, Denmark and the United States. We saw the remains of sugar mills, which was a huge deal there up until the mid 1800’s. Another island stop on this cruise was St. Maarten. On this island half of the island is ruled by France and half by the Netherlands. At the markets we were able to purchase things from each country. St. Thomas was the third island we visited. There were lots of tourist “traps” and casino’s. Typical temperatures were 80 and 75 at night. Our final stop was San Juan Puerto Rico. The history here is great, with tremendous sea-side emplacements and defense to guard against invaders from the sea. When we were on our cruise ship, we had nightly shows for our group of over 200 people. The food was over whelming on the boat. We flew back from Puerto Rico to the States. Also in 2000, NK Seed took us to Minneapolis for some sales meetings and tours of their research facilities. We also saw the Mall of America on this trip.

In 2003, Kruger Seed flew us to Cancun, Mexico. This was a beautiful all inclusive, resort. What I remember most about this trip was an 80 mile trip by bus inland to see the temple ruins of the Mayan civilization, Chichen Itza. It is one of the Seven World Wonders. What a brilliant people they were.

The Mayan people were brilliant astronomers. The pyramid temple showed the seasons, calendar, and much more very accurately. Jean and I climbed to the top of the pyramid. They also had a big enclosed area where they had duels and other sporting events. The grandeur of the place was impressive. In 2004 I had just started with Golden Harvest. They invited us to the South Sioux City Marina on the Missouri River. We met some very interesting people at this

meeting.

In January 2005 we went on the first of seven great trips with Great Lakes Hybrids, long known for their travel incentive trips all over the world. It was one of the longest plane rides I've ever been on to that time. From Atlanta to Honolulu it was a nine and a half hour flight. Thank goodness we could get up and move around. Hawaii is a beautiful place. We saw the Arizona battleship sunk by the Japanese in World War II. It is a sobering experience. We walked on Waikiki Beach. The surfers are really skilled at their sport. We saw the big cemetery where Ernie Pyle and a lot of famous people are buried. We stayed on the Big Island at a beautiful seaside resort. We had a Luau and had some great food. We went on a tour of the Big Island. We saw the black sand beaches as a result of volcanic activity on the island. We toured a processing plant for macadamia nuts. These nuts are so hard; it takes great pressure from rollers to crack the shell. I believe Hawaii is one of the only places that raise these nuts. Also, we visited the seismic center where the earthquakes all over the world are measured constantly. We had a visit to the King Ranch where they used to raise thousands of cattle. Not anymore, it's mostly a tourist trap. Pictures really tell the story of this tropical paradise. We returned home on much shorter flight to Los Angeles and then to Des Moines.

The 2006 trip was to Alaska. We landed in Anchorage, and then took a train ride to Denali National Park. We saw some beautiful scenery along the way. At the entrance to the park, I thought it was part of the sign, but it was a real cow moose grazing right by the sign. We saw grizzly bears and mountain sheep in the park. Mt. McKinley made a great backdrop for all the scenery. A return trip to Anchorage, we got on a cruise ship to begin a port call around the Gulf of Alaska. We made stops at Skagway, Ketchikan, and Juno. We saw fish hatcheries; one couple in our group went fishing and caught some Alaskan salmon. We saw a lumberjack contest. That was also a wonderful trip ending up in Vancouver, British Columbia where we boarded a plane for our trip home.

The following year, 2007, we had another great trip to Panama and the Panama Canal. The engineering here is unbelievable, especially for the time it was built. It was originally started in the 1880's by the French. They had a terrible time with disease, especially malaria because it is very tropical. The Americans took it over in the early 20th century and I believe it was completed in 1914. The main locks called Gatun, had 4.5 million cubic yards of concrete, 92 steel gates, and 1,500 electric motors. At the high point of construction, the American government employed 42,000 people, most of whom were West Indians from Barbados and Jamaica. Wages ranged from \$240 to \$7,200 for the top engineers. These were annual salaries. The first ship, S.S. Ancon, took nine hours and 45 minutes to traverse the lake and lock waterway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans on August 15, 1914. The Panama Canal cost the U. S. Government \$352 million dollars. Construction started in 1903. I have a book detailing the building of the Panama Canal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It certainly sped up commerce between Europe, Asia and the United States. Another trip we took in 2007 was with Great Lakes to the Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio. This was next to Lake Erie. It was a beautiful resort with many amenities. It was my first trip to the state of Ohio.

In 2008, we returned to Hawaii. This time we stayed on the island of Maui. Again, we saw some things we hadn't on our first trip. Believe it or not, one of our tours to the highest point in

Hawaii was cancelled because of snow and ice. We went on a submarine trip down a couple hundred feet in the ocean. We could see many different species of fish and aquatic life. We had a nice visit with Doc and Jean Hubbard from Gowrie, who then wintered in Hawaii. We had lunch in a clubhouse next to a professional 18 hole golf course. All the big names in golf were pictured in the club. Also in 2008, as a Top 50 dealer Great Lakes took us to Indianapolis to see the NASCAR Brickyard 400. The race was OK, but the track was weird that day, and nobody could make over 10 to 15 laps at a time without burning up tires. The following day we got to tour Ag Reliant Research station at Lebanon, IN, with a great dinner and entertainment.

Our biggest trip was with Great Lakes to Germany in 2011. We flew from Chicago to Stuttgart, Germany in about 9 hours. Our first day we visited Einbeck, home of KWS, the European headquarters of Ag Reliant, and Great Lakes parent company since the year 2000. An interesting side-light of this research center is that it was moved over 30 miles to West Germany before the Russians took over East Germany after World War II. This move was done at night and under heavy secrecy to avoid detection. There were really old buildings at this location. KWS is one of the largest breeders of sugar beets in the world as well as corn and beans. Our second day, we were on a cruise on the scenic Rhine River, to see the terraced vineyards and hilltop castles was a neat experience. We visited a local vineyard and sampled some of Germany's favorites. We dined in a local restaurant and enjoyed an evening of hearty fare along with live music, singing and dancing. The third day we toured a crop breeding facility and visited Heidelberg, home to Germany's oldest university. We saw the "Big Cask" in the world famous Heidelberg Castle. I believe this cask held 500 gallons of wine in its day, for everyone to have a taste when they visited the castle. On the fourth day, we traveled to Rothenberg and Munich. We stayed at Munich the next three nights. We visited Rothenburg, a picturesque medieval town with cobblestone streets and very old churches and buildings with a wall around the town. At Munich, in spite of its notorious World War II history, it is now a large modern city. Many of the luxury cars like BMW and others are headquartered here. Our first tour out of Munich was to the foothills of the Alps to visit the summer castle of "mad" King Ludwig. It is a beautiful castle with mirrored rooms, pools and all the deco of the period. In today's dollars it is estimated to cost over one billion dollars. The flowers and gardens were beautiful. We drove through the Bavarian village of Oberammergau, known for its Passion Play. That afternoon, was our most sobering experience of our entire trip. Many of our group went on a trip to see the notorious Nazi prison camp, Dachau, where they tortured and killed mostly political prisoners before and during World War II. Dachau is a short distance from Munich, maybe 30 miles. I have a book about Dachau and their stories are just unbelievable. Man's inhumanity to man. The second day we traveled to Salzburg, Austria. We toured the old town and visited Mozart's birth place, colorful flower gardens and 17th century Cathedral. This is the area where the "Sound of Music" was filmed. The last night we were treated to our own Little Oktoberfest". Boy do they know how to have a good time, plenty of food, music and dance. We visited with a large farmer in the area who had over 400 acres, mostly garden products like onions, potatoes, radishes and all types of flowers. Most farmers in Germany now farm less than 200 acres. The large farms were broken up after World War II. The following day August 9, 2011, we boarded a plane at Munich for our flight back to the States. This was a great trip I will always remember.

Old & new neighbors: Two mile radius, Old Friends

This chapter deals with old and new neighbors and friends that I have known over my life-time. First I will talk about the neighbors I have grown up with and who live on those places now. A dramatic example of this: when I graduated from high school in 1957, there were 83 farmers in Clay Township; today there are just 23 farmers who actually farm. Next door were my Uncle and Aunt, Bernard and Frances, they were great neighbors. I probably learned more about farming from Bernard than my own Dad. Bernard was 10 years younger than Dad and of a more progressive nature. Bernard had an outgoing personality, while Frances was more quiet and introverted. Bernard and Dad worked together in farming 440 acres, but 70 were in permanent pasture. It was great to see them working together. They rarely disagreed, always talking things over. When Bernard died in 1975, they already had a house in Gowrie, where Frances lived about 10 years until she had to move to Friendship Haven. Their daughter, Caryl, and her husband, Ed McWeeny, moved onto the home place, where they raised their five children: David, Julie, Gary, Mary, and Dennis. They were all very capable and intelligent and have done well. They were great neighbors and it was good to have them close. After their children were raised and Ed was retired they sold the acreage and moved to Gowrie. Bryan and Jessica Lomicka now own and live on the acreage. They have four children. Bryan works for Koch Industries at Fort Dodge and Jess is the manager of the Gowrie branch of West Central Coop. The farm land is still in the family and farmed by Keith Streit of Gowrie.

Another close neighbor was Roy and Lorraine Schneider. They moved to the farm a half mile east of our place in 1924. They had three children. The youngest, Leonard, and I have been life-long friends. Leonard is about three years older than me. Roy and Leonard were good farmers. I worked some for Leonard when he started farming Leonard's older sisters were Minneta and Loretta. One unique thing I remember about the Schneider's was when all three generations; Roy, Leonard and Bill walked on their hands, amazing. Leonard's son, Bill and wife, Donna, raised their four children there: Claire, Jake, Paige, and Zoe. The Schneider's are some of the larger farmers in the area.

Next to the Schneider's to east were Alfred and Helen Heath and their two kids, Pat and David. They were a solid, humble, church going family that moved to our neighborhood in the mid-forties. Alfred's farm was very wet and hard to farm. I eventually rented part of it. I remember in 1965 when three huge hail-stones crashed thru their kitchen roof into the house. I took Pat to her senior prom. She is a pretty and intelligent lady. Her brother, David died in a tragic swimming accident at Iowa State University in 1963-64. Pat married a good friend of mine, Lyle Schwendemann of Burnside. They both taught school in the Humboldt school system for many years. Their original farm was purchased by the Schneider's and the farmstead is now gone.

Other close neighbors to the west were Delbert and Wilma Williams. They lived in the SE corner of Section 19. They were originally from the Casey, Iowa area. They had three children: Darrell, Pearl, and Deanna. Delbert milked cows and always had colorful language when talking to his cows. Darrell was a good wood-worker and he could do some neat whistling. Deanna, a year younger than me, was my first date as mentioned in an earlier chapter. Pearl

married Bob Swanson from Harcourt and later moved to Dows, Iowa. This farm is owned by a wealthy landowner who eventually buried the farmstead. The land is now farmed by John Nelson of Gowrie.

Next farm south in Section 30 was Fred and Lillian Swan. Fred was an extremely hard working man. His family originally owned the entire Section 20. He had cement corner posts on all the fences, two barns, and a center-drag corn crib. Fred raised a lot of hogs. He also had a few cattle. My dad said Fred would pull a hog by block and tackle up in a silo at harvest to help pack the silage. He got all of the offal (manure & chicken parts) from the old Armour chicken plant in Gowrie. Talk about good fertilizer. The county tile that drains my farm goes directly thru the Swan farm. Fred and Lillian had four daughters: Bunnie, Beatrice, Alice, and Gladys. Fred died around 1950 and Lillian remained on the farm. I farmed this farm for seventeen years, beginning in 1972. Now the farm is owned and farmed by Roger Riedesel and his son, Blu, lives in the original house built in 1915. Roger restored this house in 1990. Lillian lived to her 90's. She was a very pleasant and giving lady. I got to milk her cow when she went to Chicago to visit her daughter. When I was a small boy, I was riding my bike and I fell off on the loose gravel by Lillian's house. She called my mother and brought me in her house for milk and cookies. Her youngest daughter, Gladys, died in a tragic boat accident in Minnesota. Gladys's son, Tom Lundberg, is a good friend of mine.

Just south on the east side in Section 29 were Lyle and Peggy Barkley. Lyle's parents, Fred and Minnie, had moved there in 1936 from Prole, IA just south of Des Moines. Lyle and Peggy had three kids: Ann, Tom, and Bill. Lyle was a great neighbor. Whenever you needed extra help, Lyle would be there. Dad and Bernard went to bat for Lyle when he was drafted in 1950. His dad, Fred, I believe was in WW I, his older brother, Fred Jr., was killed in WW II, his brother, Harold, was also a military veteran. They did manage to convince the military that Lyle should not have to go overseas. I believe most of his time was in Panama. The Larson's and Barkley's shelled corn, baled hay, sorted cattle, and filled five silos every fall. Lyles place was never really picked up because he was so busy helping everyone else. I remember one fall while we were cutting silage, Lyle had let the smaller calves run freely around the equipment. Uncle Bernard got so frustrated with one animal that kept sticking his nose around the moving machinery and wouldn't go away. Bernard smacked him with a 2 x 4. The calf dropped like a rock. Bernard felt terrible, but pretty soon the calf got up and wobbled off. Lyle was afraid of heights, so Bernard and I did all the silo climbing. Lyle and Peg had to move off the farm during the farm crisis of the early 80's. They moved to Gowrie where Lyle worked for Bruntlett Elevator and Peg was a cook at the Callender School for years. Their son, Tom, and wife, Sarah, live near Des Moines, Ann and husband, Pat, live near Paton, and Bill lives in Fort Dodge. Darwin Carlson and sons bought the acreage and raised hogs. They later sold it to Zach Alphs and family.

About a mile south and west, in Section 31, were Marle and Dorothy Anderson and their four children: Charles, Pat, Robert, and Jon. This farm was homesteaded by Dorothy's father, Emil Erickson. The country school where my dad went through 8th grade was located in this section. Marle had a squeaking voice and was very good at raising hogs. His favorite saying was "ain't it a fright". Dorothy was a great cook and a good friend of my mother. Bob and I were good friends and in the same class in school. Charles went to college and became a pharmacist, Pat

was an elementary teacher, Bob was a rural mail carrier, and Jon worked for the gypsum mills in Fort Dodge. Bob and Jon farmed the land, also. The farm was sold to Roger Riedesel of Gowrie and I believe one of Bob's daughter's lives on the acreage.

Just to the east of Anderson's in Section 32, were Fred and LaVessa Baedke. Soon after Fred passed away, their son, Darrel, and wife, Barb, moved onto this farm. They raised six children here: Fred, Frank, Paul, Johanna, Lisa, and Darrel Jr. Darrel worked for the state also, and Barb was a teacher. The Baedke family were good neighbors and really neat, intelligent people. Barb still owns the farm, which is farmed by Kevin Peterson. The acreage is rented out.

A mile to the east, back in Section 29, was two farms on the north side of the road. I believe Russ and Ruth Norine lived here briefly and then Russ and Ingrid Hunter. Russ milked cows. I will cover the Hunters a little bit later. This particular 120 acre farm was owned by Maurice Thompson of Ames. The acreage was later razed as the buildings were marginal. I had a chance to buy this farm in 1958 for \$325 per acre. At the time I had only \$125 in my bank account. Although this farm is directly behind my home farm, my dad said, "No way!", even though Thompson would finance me the first year.

Bordering this farm to the east was another building site owned by Carl Peterson. He was a bachelor and farmed 120 acres. I helped shell corn for Carl once or twice. Every kernel had to go in the truck. Carl had 40 acres just east of our farm. One year he had the whole forty in Flax, which is very unusual for our area. The flax had a beautiful blue flower. However, it had a very tough, wire-like stem, hard to combine, plus the seed is very small and slippery. Carl had to seal his wagons with burlap to seal the cracks. Martin and Margaret Telleen lived briefly on this farm after Carl died. The acreage is gone and the land is now owned by Leonard Schneider.

Across the road from Carl, was an 80 acre farm and acreage owned by the Griffen family. Chuck and Gladys (Swan) Lundberg lived here for a few years in the 1950's. I believe Chuck farmed the Swan farm after Fred died. This farm had a pretty good roll-over of tenants and was later demolished. Those 80 acres is now owned by Dale Johnson of Dayton. Chuck Lundberg was a little different, but a likeable man. Before he was married he took my brother, my cousin David, and I to the Iowa State Fair in his new '54 Ford red convertible. Wow, what a deal!

The next family to the east, in Section 28, was Martin and Margaret Telleen. They had two children: Mark and Marcia. Martin was a great guy, a good farmer. Martin and his brother Vernon did custom baling with a Super 77 New Holland baler. The first 3 years I was out of high school, I loaded over 100,000 bales each summer behind that baler. Every farmer had many acres of hay and straw to bale every summer. Margaret was an out-going, ambitious lady. She was active in many community activities, including the county 4-H fair. They were both really respected members of the community and church. Mark went to Iowa State and went on to become a banker. He tragically took his life in the 1990's. Marcia is a registered nurse and lives in Ankeny with husband, Bob Anderson, who grew up in Lanyon. The Telleen farm is now farmed by Kevin Peterson. Kevin's mother was a first cousin to Margaret. Today Derrick and Jenny Rasmussen live on the acreage.

The next place down the road, in Section 33, was Ralph and Amanda Carlon. The Carlons were an old established family in our community. Ralph had a brother, Edwin, who was a Lutheran

minister. Charles and Dorothy Carlon moved to the home farm in the early 50's after they graduated from Iowa State College. Chuck was Ralph and Amanda's younger son. His older brother was Richard. They farmed together. Chuck and Dorothy raised five children; Diane, Roger, David, Alan, and Nancy. The Carlons were very personable, intelligent family, the older kids baby-set my children. I believe all the Carlons graduated from Iowa State College in different fields of education. Chuck died in 1985. Dorothy now lives at the Gowrie Care Center. David and his wife Lori now live on the home farm. David built a beautiful new home here in 2001. Dave farms the land and also works for Streit Construction as a carpenter. Lori is an art teacher at Clarion and Dows. They are a great couple, good neighbors and friends.

Going on to the east on the north side, in Section 28, was a 160 acre farm owned by Frank Alliger of Paton. The earliest family I remember was Lowell and Ann Creger, who moved there in the late 40's. Ann Creger was Frank's daughter. They had six children: Dick, Pat, Tom, Jim, and twins Bob and Becky. Pat was to be my future wife in 1967. Lowell liked to do other things beside farm, so they moved in the 1950's to Stanhope where he worked for the telephone company there. In 1961, they returned to a farm south of Gowrie to help the Alliger family farm many acres. When the Cregers moved I believe the Jorden Thompson family moved there for a short time, later Ed and Zany Rydman lived there. After that Parke and Frances Kruse lived there until 1971 when Pat and I moved there. Our kids, Alan and Lisa, spent their younger years there. Pat left in 1975, when she filed for divorce. When Frank Alliger died, the Creger kids wanted me to buy the farm. So in 1976 I bought the 160 acres for \$2,100 per acre on a 30 year contract. During the farm crisis of the early 80's I sold this farm to Frances Prendergast for \$2,900 per acre. I had demolished the buildings after a tragic fire burned the house in 1977, when my brother, Bob, and his family were living there. This farm had a bad history, which is now farmed by Dallas Thomas of Rinard/Somers, and owned by Nancy Prendergast. The north 80 on the farm is owned by John Samuelson.

Further east on the corner, Section 27, were Marvin and Rosemary Telleen. They raised five children here: Stephanie, Evan, Bruce, Brian, and Jon. Marvin milked between 45-50 Brown Swiss cows. His family had the Telleen Dairy at Gowrie. When I was in school we always wanted Telleen milk from Forsmark Dairy. My earliest memory of this farm was Marvin's brother, Merrill, and wife lived in a little chicken brooder house on this farm. They were shorter people, but one couldn't help feel a bit sorry for them living in such a small house. Rosemary was my second grade teacher. She was a good teacher, and also very active in community and church activities. Marvin was a very hard worker and knew his cows very well. The boys were very good at showing cattle at fairs and shows. Evan and Jon never married and now lives on the home farm. They sold their cows in 2011, but still have a few cattle. Jon is a part-time Schwann's Food truck salesman. Bruce has a large farm operation in eastern Iowa. Stephanie, who died of cancer a few years ago, lived in Oklahoma City. They still own the family farm.

Just south of Telleens, across the road in Section 33, were Paul and Mabel Anderson. Paul was my great uncle. His sister, Amanda, was my Grandma Larson (Warner's wife). Paul was the youngest of the original John S. Anderson family that settled here in 1864. Paul and Mabel had six children; Charles, John, Virginia, Pauline, Harriet, and Margaret. This was certainly a unique family, very well educated, very diverse, and interesting. Paul was an Iowa State Senator from 1930-1934. I believe he got at least two bills passed into law. During his time in

Des Moines, Paul developed a taste for alcohol and had trouble with this the rest of his life. Mabel was a stable influence for the family. Paul was never really into farming, later renting the 240 acre farm to Earl Hunter and his son-in-law Harold Orness. I remember one time baling wild native grass on part of this farm that had never been row-cropped. I think Paul died around 1960, but Mabel lived about another 20 years. My mother tried to avoid Paul who came by our place frequently. He would stand by the door reciting Shakespeare or Socrates. The children: Charles and John were both in the newspaper business in Sioux City and Storm Lake; Virginia and Pauline were brilliant, one could speak seven languages and worked at the United Nations; Harriet married Russ Peterson, the grocer at Gowrie, Margaret lives at Davenport where she raised a large family. She has ridden the RAGBRAI Bike run into her 80's. One of her daughters is into our family genealogy. The family sold the farmland to John Samuelson. The acreage was sold to Daniel Ford. One of the direct heirs of Paul and Mabel is Jeff Peterson, Harriet's son, who operates the Jamboree Foods of Gowrie with his wife Julie.

Our next neighbors to visit are the Russ and Ingrid Hunter family in Section 28. This was another Carlon family farm in our neighborhood. Will Carlon was Ingrid Hunter's dad. He was a rather small man who always had a piece of licorice in his pocket for all the small kids in the area. Russ and Ingrid had seven kids; Ron, Rick, Randy, Rollie, Rod, Ray, and Ruth Ann. Russ milked Brown Swiss cows and farmed about 240 acres. Russ smoked a lot of Camel cigarettes. He was a very good talker; you didn't quite know what he was talking about sometimes. One gruesome story about Russ was when he got his fingers caught in a corn picker chain and lost parts of three fingers. Ingrid was also a good talker and a great cook. My dad said their farm was one of the three oldest homes in Clay Township. Nobody now lives on the acreage and the land is farmed by Duane Peterson.

Across the road from Russ Hunter, in Section 27, were Russ' brother, Earl, and wife, Wilda, Hunter and their two daughters, Joan and Maridee. The two girls were about nine years apart in age. Earl also milked Brown Swiss cows. I remember what a small home they had on a 160 acre farm. Chet Orness helped Earl with the farm work. Many farmers had extra help then because of all the labor needed. Earl and Wilda had brought Harold Orness to their farm as a small boy to raise him after his parents had died. Harold was the youngest of eight kids. Harold grew up with the Hunters and then went off to the air force. While in the military, Harold and Joan started corresponding and eventually married and moved back to that farm, after Earl and Wilda moved to a farm near Gowrie. Harold and Joan ended up buying the farm after the buildings were gone. Harold and Joan moved down the road to the Paul Anderson farm that Harold was already farming. Harold raised hogs and had an out-going personality. They were both active in community activities. They eventually bought a house in Gowrie after Harold retired. Joan continues to live in Gowrie after Harold died. Maridee lives in Cedar Rapids. The original Earl Hunter farm is now owned by John Samuelson.

In Section 21, southeast corner was the Ray Toms family. They had a large family also. I believe he worked at the gypsum mills. Previously, Alfred Heath's twin brother, Albert Heath, and his wife, who was a twin to Helen Heath, lived there. This was a pretty poor piece of land, so neither party could make a living there. After these people left, I farmed the 80 acres for seven years for John Heath, who owned it. That farm is now owned by the Mormon Church and farmed by Don Sandell of Burnside.

Other neighbors where I grew up were the Norberg's to the west. Otto and Jake were father and son. Another son, Clarence, and wife, Lucille, lived just west of them. In later years, after Otto and Jake had passed, Otto's daughter, Agnes, and Husband, Albert (Chic) Robertson lived on the farm.

Connie and Famine Hade, parents of Maurice, Harlan and Phyllis, lived to our south about two miles. Harlan was about 6' 4" and a very good athlete. The family still owns the land.

The big "Cathcart" farm, across from Hades was farmed by Oral Hanson, Art and Louise Arter, Dick Larsen, Roger H. Peterson and is now farmed by Roger's brother, Kevin. This is an extremely wet farm. In 1993, this 440 acre farm had 165 acres under water.

To the east were the Nelson family, Lawrence and Clarence. They raised their families here. They serviced our private electric line out of Gowrie, called the C & G line. We had electricity here going back to 1918. This was very unusual for the time. My dad was twelve years old then. Dad said Grandpa told them to leave the lights on all night just to see them and enjoy them.

To the north and west were Kenny and Madeline Johnson. Kenny was certainly an interesting person. He had a pilot's license before he had a driver's license. His father, Ed, and Uncle Tom had accumulated a lot of land over the years. I believe Kenny was farming over 800 acres. He always had big ideas of farming, jumping from project to project. They eventually lost everything to bad or mistimed adventures.

In the same neighborhood were Stanley and Lorna Cline. Stanley was slightly older than me. His family was excellent farmers, but Stan liked to "pull your chain" especially the trustees and supervisors. His three sons; Daryl, Bart and Curt now farm about 2000 acres in our area.

Just a mile north of us, were Bill and Helen Johnson. They were great people with two children; Jan and Doyle. Bill not only farmed, but was a well-known and popular official of basketball and baseball games. I believe he is in the Hall of Fame for basketball in the state of Iowa. He officiated at several girls state basketball tournaments. Previously to the Johnson's, Floyd and Lenice Barnum lived here. They raised two sons, Alan and Robert. In addition to farming, Floyd was the janitor for the Callender School.

After Bill and Helen moved to Callender, Mike and Lisa Peterson moved to this farm. Both are Callender natives. Mike is the son of Marion and Opal Peterson and Lisa is the daughter of Kenny and Madelyn Johnson. Mike is an excellent farmer and one of his hobbies is landscaping and yard work. Lisa is the Spanish teacher at Southeast Valley School system. They are currently still living on this farm. They have two sons, Parker and Spencer, both out of college.

To the east of Johnson's were Ellsworth and Mary Herrick. They lived across the road from the Clay Center School house. They bought this farm in the 1950's from Walt Phillips family, a pioneer family in the area. They came from Grand Junction. They were a little different, but nice people. Their son lived on that farm until his death. Dick Herrick struggled with farming, later renting it to Roger Peterson and then the Cline family. The place is now owned by Lauren McCluckie.

In Section 22 of Clay Township were Harvey and Elsie Samuelson and their son, John. They were a wealthy pioneer family whose great-Grandfather had settled in Clay Township around 1880. They were very intelligent people. Harvey played some on the futures market. He liked good cigars and good whiskey. I was chairman of the Cattlemen's and we did a party for Harvey to celebrate his 80th birthday. He told me to come to his house the next day so he could pay the Cattlemen for helping do the party. At 8:30 the next morning, he greeted me with a case of Canadian Club someone had given him. He started pouring a water glass of this for me. I told him I wasn't much of a drinker, so he eventually watered it down with 7-up. I remember one instance, probably in the 1970's, when Harvey and his brother, Carl, always fed cattle twice as long as they had to. This particular load of 25 head averaged 1,808 pounds in Joliet. I remember one animal having got stuck in the loading chute. This animal weighed well over a ton. Well what to do, he called my Uncle Franklin, who was thick with IBP (Iowa Beef) and talked Franklin into taking the animal to IBP. I don't know how that turned out. It took a big tractor loader to get the animal out of the chute. Their son, John has had a nice career in the feed business, and a military career. John and son, Nick, own and farm about 1,800 acres. John's wife, Marsha, is our Township clerk.

About a half mile east of Samuelson's were Milt Danielson and his wife. This is the first farm I ever walked beans to cut out the weeds when I was in eighth grade. Milt moved to Lehigh shortly and DeWayne and Edna Fiala moved here around 1955-56. DeWayne was a likeable fellow and Edna was also an upbeat and pleasant person. DeWayne milked cows and was always experimenting with new farm practices. They had five children. DeWayne became the 4-H leader for The Clay Champions Club after I left 4-H. He did this for many years. He was also a long time director on the Webster County Cattlemen. Edna died an untimely death from cancer. Two of their sons, Mark and Steve, also died in car accidents. DeWayne passed away in 2013 at the age of 83. That farm is now farmed by Riedesel Farms.

Farmers always help each other out, especially when hardships happened. I remember at least two of them. In the late 1950's, Cecil Houdeshell, who lived one mile north, had suffered a heart attack at planting time. About twenty planters and equipment came in and planted his crop in one day. The biggest planter was a four-row. A few years later, Marvin Telleen, I believe broke his leg after harvest. Then neighbors came in and plowed his land. Over thirty farmers showed up, me included. We all had three-bottom plows, except Bill Schump, who had a new 560 tractor and a four-bottom plow. This concludes my summary of the immediate neighbors when I grew up.

Other close friends I had in my young adult years were four people who influenced my life as much as my parents. One was Fred Schwendemann of Burnside. How our paths crossed I'm not sure. Yes, I did ask his daughter, Lois, for a date in 1956, but she was too young and Fred said "no you don't!" Fred farmed and helped my Uncle Franklin, also. Fred could talk a mile-a-minute, was a hard worker and a fast driver. His wife, Ruth, was very patient with him. Their son, Lyle, was a good friend of mine. Lyle and I once took a trip to western Nebraska to visit his grandparents at Gordon, Nebraska. I remember kneeling at the bedside for evening prayer there. Fred was rather impulsive, selling farms and moving around. He once was one of two people running the Palm Grove Elevator. One evening he called me and wanted to drive to Pierre, SD. to see a mutual friend. We left our place at 6 p.m. and were at Pierre (450 miles)

five and one half hours later. There were no speed limits in the early 60's. Fred taught me how to work hard, do things right and be straight-up with people. Fred spent most of his later years in Dayton. They always welcomed me into their home.

The next man, of a large influence, was the man we drove to South Dakota to see, Charles Luecke and wife, Gladys. Charlie came to know our family by chance. He was sitting on a fence, in the stockyards at St. Paul, MN when my Uncle Franklin came by and struck up a conversation. Charlie and Gladys became life-long friends of the Larson's after that. Charlie owned a large ranch near Oneida, SD. I believe it was about 36 quarter sections. Gladys and Charlie had no children. His hired man's name was Howard Swain. They had about a 220 head herd of Hereford cows. They ran about 1,800 acres of hay and pasture for the herd. At this time I was starting to feed more than five cattle at a time. Charlie started sending his calf crop to Iowa every year. Of course, I had no money, but I had some feed, so Charlie would send his heifer calves to me, 40 or 50 head. After I had fed them to market weight, the price per pound I got was what Charlie got for the original weight, no interest. I did this for about eight years. Charlie also loaned me \$4,200 for my first new Farmall 560 tractor. I paid it back in two years. We stayed at his house many times and ate fresh fish, caught at the Oahe Dam on the Missouri River. He visited here several times, also.

One of the first times at Charlie's ranch, his hired man, Howard Swain invited me to go Jack Rabbit hunting in the winter time on the wheat stubble. They had a 4-wheel drive Ford pick-up truck. It was a rough ride across the frozen land. It was also, at night, but with a good spot light, we came back with a truck load of rabbits.

They had big operations in South Dakota in the 60's. I saw a Big Bud tractor, 550 horsepower, pulling a 90 foot one-way disc on wheat stubble in a 960 acre field. The farmer said he covered thirty acres in one round. Also, he told me that north of Pierre, Prudential Insurance Company had about 15,000 acres in corn.

Charlie offered me to take over his ranch in 1963. It was a great opportunity, but it was far from home, friends and family. Charlie was a great friend and mentor. I have a lot of good memories.

The third man of considerable influence on my life was Harold Alliger. Harold was about four years older than me. He grew up at Paton and lived most of his adult life near Churdan and Lohrville. His dad was Frank Alliger and his mother was Emma. His mother died when Harold was young. Frank married Bonnie Van Pelt. She was a country school teacher. Harold and I got very well acquainted after I married his niece, Pat Creger. Harold's sister, Ann, was my mother-in-law. Harold and his family farmed over 2,000 acres in the 1960's, which was unheard of at the time. Harold quit school in the eighth grade to help farm. He always said those were the hardest four years of my life. They believed in tiling and improving the land. They also had livestock. All of Harold's kids helped with the farming, there were seven of them; Cindy, Kathy, Steve, Larry, Brian, Barb, and Dennis. I helped shell corn one summer, almost 50,000 bushels. They farmed in Carroll, Greene, Calhoun, and Webster Counties. Harold and I went to some big tractor pulls together. The most memorable one was coming down the interstate in Illinois when his '69 Chevy blew a motor. The temperature was below zero and Harold told his son and me to stay in the car and he started walking. Another farmer picked him up only because he was wearing a seed corn cap. Another time in Louisville, KY., I was driving

Harold's new Cadillac, because he thought I was a better driver in the city. I was driving on an off ramp on a free-way, when a brick crashed thru the windshield. I remember having some bloody knuckles and shattered glass all over me. We never did know what happened exactly, except there was some demolition work in the area. The car only had 1,500 miles on it. Harold was a good friend who believed in me. He died before his time. His wife, Marjorie and a couple of kids still live in the area.

The fourth man of influence in my life is Greg Schmadeke of Callender. Greg is about eight years younger than me. He farmed with his dad, Warren, and brother, Clay. They had one farm bordering ours in Section 22 of Clay Twp. Greg was a very good farmer, probably ahead of his time with large machinery and new ideas. The family raised Crows Seed corn for many years. I believe they farmed over 2,000 acres at one time. Greg could plant the straightest corn rows before GPS came. Greg had a Steiger Tiger tractor that he pulled a ten bottom plow, a 60 foot field cultivator, and a 45 foot tandem disc. One wet year, I couldn't get thru the Swan farm so Greg came over with the 60 foot field cultivator and dried the field out. He covered the 80 acres in one and a half hours. When times got really tough in the early '80's, both Greg and I went to ridge-till farming to save on machinery and fuel costs. We formed the T-2000 Ridge-Till Club in Webster County along with about another forty people. We did this for about ten years. A lot of Greg's land was rented land for farm managers, which he eventually lost most of it. Greg also, went thru a divorce like I did. We went to a lot of tractor pulls together. Greg was my right-hand man at the seven Gowrie Tractor Pulls. We also got rained out of a big pull at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in 1977. We were going to do this for the Iowa Tractor Pullers Association. Greg and his wife, Amy, live near Callender today and Greg works for Anderson Machinery Sales. Greg is a great guy and I treasure his friendship. God bless you, Greg.

Farming: First farm, Landlords, Cattle, Machinery, Changes, Technology

Farming is something I have done all my life and I still learn something every day. At this writing I am preparing to plant corn for 54 years straight. Now I only farm 240 acres. In following pages I will review my farming practices, landlords, and experiences. As a young man, I had done mostly day labor, but had always observed or helped Dad and Uncle Bernard. In March of 1961, a little Nash Rambler drove into our yard. They owned an 80 about a mile and a half from our farm in Section 21. The couple, Clarence and Vera Mollenhoff, was managing this farm for her mother, Anna Perry. They had a pretty poor renter there, and they wanted to make a change. Wow, was I excited. We drew up the papers and I farmed for them for 17 years. This was a pretty poor piece of land with poor drainage and low fertility. A dredge ditch went right thru the 80, so there was no excuse for not tiling. I convinced them and a year or two later they put in a large amount of tile. They had never had over 80 bushel corn and 20 bushel beans. In a few years I had those figures up to 120 corn and 40 beans. The farm renter was an alcoholic, so Dad and I spent a half day picking up beer and whisky bottles from the fence lines. The Mollenhoffs were always fair and good to me. They sold this farm eventually to David Mickleson. All these people lived near Lehigh.



First New Tractor –1963 Farmall 560 Gas



Don on B Farmall in 1947

My dad had bought another 80, in 1962, in Section 28 of Clay Township. We called this the “Anderson 80”. At this time I was using Dad’s machinery, so I thought it was time I own some machinery of my own.. However, I had no credit and I didn’t want Dad to co-sign because he still had two kids in college. So, I went to my old friend from South Dakota, Charlie Lueke, and he loaned me \$4,200 for two years to buy a new 560 Farmall tractor. I paid Charlie off in two years. I also bought an IH #37 tandem disc for \$675, and I put it together myself. By the second year I made enough money to buy a four bottom plow for the 560 tractor and a 32 foot crust-breaker harrow for leveling plowed ground. In 1962, Dad and I bought a new air planter, an 8-row IH 400. I remember Dad starting out across the field with the new planter; he stopped after about 200 yards, because of the new monitor with all the flashing lights. It was too much technology. You have to remember that Dad grew up with strictly horse-power and horse

machinery. Of course I loved the new equipment. I've planted the crop ever since then. By the way, Dad outbid a neighbor for the "Anderson 80" for \$412 per acre. John Morton Construction of Gowrie, patterned tiled the "Anderson 80" in 1974. Dad went in with three neighbors on this project, with government help, to tile in those days. I believe Dad's share for that "80" was around \$3,500. They put in a fourteen inch main with 100 foot five inch laterals. That was a big improvement. I recall seeing some goofy old lines on that farm. Somebody must have had it in for the former owner, as for several hundred feet; each tile was set at a 45 degree angle to each other. I don't know when this happened because this 80 was in permanent pasture until 1947. Long before the new tile was installed, I remember combining beans in the ponds here when they were frozen over. My son, Alan, was born on November 4, 1968; I combined a wagon load of beans that day. This "80" had a double corn crib, holding about 3000 bushel. Another "80" we already had across the intersection, in Section 22, was called the "Carlton 80" after the farmer owners, Edwin and Effie Carlton. My Dad had bought this

"80" in 1958 for \$375 per acre on a private contract at 3.5% interest. This "80" had a little better drainage than the "Anderson "80", but we added more tile over the years. Talking about tile, we are about two miles from the watershed, all our land is drained to the west, the Raccoon River, and two miles east all water goes to the Des Moines River. As the crow flies, our home farm is eleven miles from the Des Moines River, but our water goes at least 25 miles south and west to the Raccoon River. Another "80" I rented in the late 60's was the Heath "80" located in Section 21. This farm was owned by the John Heath family. It was about 75 tillable acres and very weedy. I put the farm in continuous corn for three years and used straight Atrazine to control the weeds. I believe I paid \$45 - \$50 cash rent .for this farm. There were many point rows on this farm, as it was bisected by a drainage ditch. I farmed this 80 seven years, until it was sold to Tracey Stoner and later to the Mormon Church. There were no row shut-offs in 1970, so a lot of wasted seed. I had two farms with a ditch thru them. It was an annual ritual to pick up rocks along the ditch bank that the frost had pushed up. I rented another farm, I believe around 1970. I knew the current tenant, Dick Larson, was moving to a farm near Duncombe. The owner was Lillian Swan. I'll never forget, I was combining beans on the Carlton "80", when Lillian and her friend, Hannah Ryberg, came driving by. Lillian climbed through a barbed wire fence with a house dress on, to stop and ask if I would rent her 160 acres. Of course I said yes, and this started a seventeen year relationship. Although her farm was a wet one, it was also high-producing in a normal type year. Towards the last year, I paid Lillian around \$150 per acre rent. But, I remember one particularly wet year when I lost about five acres to ponding; she took off \$750 off of my rent. She was a great lady to work for, inviting me in for cookies or goodies. One year on the Swan farm, the neighbors sprayed Banvel on his corn on a real windy day. I didn't discover it for about a week. The bean crop only made about 20 bushel to the acre where it was sprayed. There was no adjustment ever made by the neighbor. The Swan farm is now owned and operated by Roger Riedesel and his son Blu lives in the original house built by Fred Swan in 1915 for about \$50,000. The basement has eight foot ceilings and the stairway up is over six foot wide. The dining area has built-in china cabinets. Roger rebuilt and restored this house in 1990.

The first year I farmed the Alliger farm was in 1972. This 160 acre farm was owned by Pat's grandfather, Frank Alliger. Frank wasn't happy with the previous tenant, so he was pretty willing to have his granddaughter and husband on the farm. We crop-shared this farm with corn

and beans. Frank and son, Harold, improved this farm with extra tile. We filled a large corn crib with ear corn every year and raised feeder pigs here. There was also a large barn here that had not been cleaned in several years. The manure was so deep the cattle had to eat over the top board. I don't remember how long it took, but Tom and Jim Creger and myself cleaned this barn by hand, no skid loader in those days. Eventually, this barn blew down, because all of the sills had rotted away. When Frank died in 1976, I bought the farm from the Creger kids for \$2,100 per acre. I continued to farm this land until I had to sell it in 1982, because of the farm crisis. Francis Prendergast and John Samuelson each bought 80 acres. I had demolished all the buildings prior to the sale of the land.

I believe it was in 1979 that Uncle Frank asked me to farm his land. I think he had retired with a farm sale in 1976. His farm was a productive farm, but poorly tiled. It was fenced in 40 acre segments. I took out all the fences and corners, because he had no livestock and I had larger equipment. We crop-shared and we got along pretty good for the most part. Frank insisted we fill the ear corn crib every year and shell it out the following February. One year when we had a pretty even crop year, I told him I would combine my 50% of the corn crop and pick his share for the crib. We carefully counted the rows and when we shelled his share in February, I ended up with 12 bushel more per acre than he did with ear corn. The extra handling and shrink caused this discrepancy. We combined all the corn in succeeding years! The farm needed more balanced fertility and lime added, but Frank and Jeanette didn't think it was necessary. When we had to reorganize in 1983 and went to ridge-tilling, Uncle Frank did not care for this. He thought it "looked like shit on a white hen", but it worked pretty well for me. We really struggled in 1993 on this farm (the wettest year I've ever seen). Corn planting got spread over a three week period, and the beans had a few weeds. That was the last year I farmed it. My cousins, Lois and Judy, still own the farm and it is farmed by Duane and Mark Peterson. They are excellent farmers and also have access to a tiling machine.

I have farmed 1,240 different acres in my life, and for two years I covered 1,080 acres with just part time help and fed out 400-500 cattle every year. I did have some good part time help, besides Dad and Dad was 74 years old in 1980. The men that worked for me were Rich Hay, Ed and Lloyd Stewart, Bill Mosher and Dennis Wood.

Machinery has really changed over the years. I have mentioned my first 560 tractor, disc, and plow in an earlier chapter. I started driving a B Farmall tractor in 1946. This tractor had about 16 horsepower. Dad and Uncle Bernard shared a Farmall F-20 to do the heavy work. I couldn't drive this because it was so awkward to drive and I was too little to reach the clutch and of course, no power steering. The F-20 had a huge concrete block on the left rear platform for added traction when plowing. I think this block weighed at least 300 pounds. No wheel weights or fluid in the old days. Dad and Uncle Bernard shared the F-20, a Farmall H, and Farmall B until 1952. Then they each bought a Super M Farmall and a Super C Farmall from Dean McDonald of Gowrie Implement. Bernard never liked the Super C, so he traded for an 8 N Ford, which was a great loader tractor. I scooped a lot of manure and snow with this tractor. It had a live hydraulic pump, which made it a pretty fast loader tractor. I believe Dad paid about \$2,400 for the Super M and the Super C was about \$1,700. One of the first machinery purchases I made was a manure spreader. Dad was still using an old steel wheel John Deere spreader from the 1930's. I traded a '52 Chevy car to Reuben Lundberg in Dayton for a #17

New Idea, rubber tired spreader, and \$400 to boot! By the mid 60's, we were filling four corn cribs with ear corn, so moving the corn elevator was a big deal, so Dad found a 42 foot hydraulic elevator at the IH dealer in Lohrville. This really saved a lot of work, as I could put this on my 560 tractor, which had enough hydraulic power to lift this up on any crib or pile.

I believe the last year we threshed was 1947. Everyone had oats in those days. I remember Mom furnishing the big meals for the crew and washing up out in the yard. I think that threshing run included Dad, Uncle Bernard, Henry Peterson, and boys; Chuck and Dick, Arvid Johnson, who lived on the Farnham farm and Otto and Clarence Norberg. What a busy time, everyone had a job to do. This short story leads up to our next machine, a McCormick Deering # 62 pull combine. It was powered by a C or H tractor stationary motor on the combine, pulled by another tractor. It was a good oat combine. We never had soybeans then. Uncle Bernard operated this most of the time. It had a side hitch, so we could pull a flare box wagon alongside to catch the grain. It was a hot, dirty job and Bernard had fashioned a bracket on the hitch to hold a burlap wrapped, porcelain jug to hold cold water. We mostly combined the oats out of a windrow, not standing oats. This was Dad's job, to windrow the oats with an eight foot McCormick Deering windrower, pulled by the Super C. In the mornings, when it was tough or dewy, the canvas that delivered the oats to the end was hard to tighten. It had to be tightened at regular intervals until noon, or else it would slip.

My memories of my first corn picker was a pull-row two row 2P McCormick Deering. This was a bulky machine with dozens of grease zerks. We pulled this with the Super M with an attached wagon. One year it was very late season and very cold. So cold, that Bernard couldn't engage the PTO (power -take-off). He got a bushel of dry corn cobs and built a small fire under the cast housing of that Super M to warm up that heavy gear oil. It worked, and pretty soon we were picking corn. When we started raising beans around 1960, we hired a neighbor, Wilbur Wolf, who did custom work with on a Gleaner combine. It had no cab. We did this for several years

Another big change in equipment changes since I was a boy is the way we haul our grain to market. Every farmer had a flare box wagon in the 1950's. A flare box was just that, a flared wagon that maybe held 100 bushels. The flared box made it easier to unload ear corn or grain into the old corn crib grain elevator. The barge box became popular in the 1960's. Some of the larger ones held up to 200 bushels. The hydraulic lift cylinders were being put on the flare and barge boxes. Some of the larger barge boxes were 7 feet wide and 14 feet. In the early 70's, gravity boxes came on the scene, the early ones held 250-300 bushel. The gravity boxes had steep sides to let gravity take care of the unloading. These type of boxes are still being used, but have grown to hold over 1,000 bushel, with brakes and lights, so they can be towed down a highway. In 1974, I pulled two DMI gravity wagons down Interstate 80 from Goodfield, Illinois to Gowrie. They trailed real well, but the traffic was not as heavy as today. In the last ten years, semi- trucks have really come on strong. Even the smaller farmers have a semi. The efficiency of trucks is great. With our choice of markets, once on wheels, a few more miles are no big deal. Some of the larger farms have three or four semis, and have drivers to keep them busy all year.



Tractors Owned 1975

In 1967, Bernard offered to go half on a new self-propelled combine with me. We bought a Massey Ferguson 300 combine from Cliff Moe at the Tasler Imp., of Farnhamville. This combine with a 13 foot platform and a two row corn head was a total of \$10,778. The 300 was the very newest for the time. I believe it had about 65 horsepower. The big thing to me was it had “quick tatch” heads, so you could change from beans to corn in a very short time with no hassle. It had a cab, lights and was a very popular combine in its day. Another job we did about once a week was to grind ear corn for the cattle. For several years we hired John Amandus of Gowrie to do this job with a truck mounted grinder. When he retired I bought a Henke roller mill for \$2,230 in 1969. We could power this with our own tractors and it did a beautiful job of crushing the cob and corn without all the dust of a hammer mill. In 1971, I traded my 1206 tractor for a 1466. The price for this tractor was \$14,000 retail. Then 1977, I traded the 1466 for a 1486 at Stratford Implement. Prices were going up, but this tractor had more options than the 1466. This tractor retailed for \$28,700. Also, in the mid 70’s I had bought a 1566 which I traded for a 1586 in 1982. A lot of tractors in a short time but remember we farmed over 1,000 acres with livestock. In 1973, I traded the MF 300 combine for a MF 750 combine. This combine was much bigger than the 300, with a six row corn head and a 20 foot bean platform. The retail for the 750, in 1973, complete was \$32,770. We were allowed \$14,500 for the MF 300 combine. In 1978, I traded the original 750 for another to gain some new improvements, including a better corn head. In 1978, the retail had jumped to \$60,310. For my cattle, I needed the necessary equipment. In early 1977, we traded our old Westendorf loader for a 12-C Hydra Mac skid loader for \$7,500. This was one of the handiest pieces of equipment I ever owned. I put over 2,500 hours on this skid loader. In 1979, I purchased a lot of cattle equipment, manure spreader, a #892 NH chopper, a 14 foot Hesston windrower, and over 400 feet of cement fence-line feed

bunks. Also, we built three 80 foot Harvester silos. We owned one and leased two. They were great assets, but very expensive. Hind sight says “don’t do it”. During the late 70’s and early 80’s interest rates shot up to 15-18%. Because of the economics many farmers had to cut back or sell out, and I was one of them. We had two different farm sales. The first was on March 24, 1984, and the second sale was on February 11, 1986. John Lizer and Glenn Anderson had both sales. We had registered buyers from as far away as Kansas. During these difficult times, the combined sales brought almost \$300,000. The two leased Harvestores went back to Harvestore and the fence-line bunks I sold privately to friends.

After this time, I was still farming 700 acres, so I still needed some farm equipment. Some of my friends were already doing ridge-till farming, where one farms on the same row every year. You no longer need the big tractors and tillage equipment. So I bought back a Farmall 706 tractor, a six row corn planter with ridge cleaners on it, and a heavy duty ridge cultivator to build up the ridges every year, when you cultivated your crop. I then hired someone to combine the crop. We had a ridge-till club with over 40 members that met regularly during the winter months in Fort Dodge. Members represented over five or six counties in the area. We learned about different techniques and equipment and had great speakers. However, every system has its drawbacks. I found out my fertility levels were lowering and not always getting to the root zone, plus we had allopathy from the bean straw damaging the corn stand the following year. Because of decreasing yields, I went back to conventional farming in 1994.



New John Deere

In December of 1995, I changed direction in terms of what color tractor we had been farming with for three generations. We always had red or Farmall tractors, from the old F-20 to the 1586. In 1995 my biggest tractor was a 1967 Farmall 706 German diesel with around 95 horsepower. We shopped around at three different “red” dealers for a larger more modern tractor. The John Deere dealer at Harcourt shot me a deal for an 8100 tractor that was several thousand dollars less than the nearest bid for a red tractor with the same horsepower. The 8100 John Deere has been a great tractor, about 180 horsepower. We later added a computer chip to boost the horsepower to over 200. Sounds like a lot of power, but today’s large row crop tractors have well over 500 horsepower. By the way, my old 706 had over 15,000 operating hours. In my farming career, I’ve operated at least 14 different tractors.

I now farm with modern technology. I have been using GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) technology for five years. I prepare and plant my fields with this technology. It is accurate within one or two inches. A brand new system is rapidly becoming popular. My John Deere corn planter has no drive chains or drill shafts. It is driven by computer generated soft-ware electronically. It is called V-drive and drives a plastic seed disc called V-set.

It is 99% accurate and automatically shuts off on the end rows or point rows. It is very efficient

and accurate. My equipment is made by Precision Planting in Illinois, but all of the major equipment lines John Deere and Case IH, have this available. I think often what would my Grandpa Larson say after he probably farmed my farm with actual horsepower in the 1920's I think he would really like it, as he was a progressive farmer.

FARM MACHINERY **AUCTION**

At the Farm located from the Northeast Corner of Gowrie, Iowa, 3 Miles North and 1½ Miles East. From Palm Grove, Iowa, 3½ Miles West. From Callender, Iowa, ½ Mile East, 2½ Miles South and 1½ Miles East, on

TUESDAY, MARCH 27TH

—Starting At 1:00 o'clock p.m.

—MACHINERY—

1984

1977 IHC 1586 Diesel Tractor, 2300 Hours, Cab with Air, Heater, Radio, Tires like new, Quick Coupler, Duals, Bracket and Front Wts. Sold as a unit and ready for the field.

1978 John Deere #1100—32-Ft. Field Cultivator with Leveler

1978 John Deere #7100—12-Row 30" Planter with Monitor, Herbicide and Insecticide Attachments

1978 IHC #133—12-Row 30" Cultivator, Hydraulic Fold & Rolling Shields

1978 John Deere #420—12-Row 30" Rotary Hoe, 3 Pt.

DMI—NH3—13 Knife, Anhydrous Applicator

1974 FarmRite—500 Gal. Trailer Sprayer with Pump

—FORAGE EQUIPMENT—

1979 New Holland #892 Forage Chopper

2-Row Corn Head

7-Ft. Windrow Hay Pickup

2—1981 Badger Tandem Axle Gears with 16-Ft. Badger Forage Boxes with Roof

1976 Hesston #1014 Hydro-Swing Windrower

—HAY AND GRAIN EQUIPMENT—

Wheatley Stack Mover, 3 Point David Grain Cleaner with elec. motor

Little Giant Incline Elevator with gas motor

Parker Hydraulic Auger for Gravity Flo Box

1000 Gal. Water Barrel with transfer pump

3 Point 300 Gallon Spray Tank

Auctioneer Note: All Modern Equipment on this sale. Has had the best of care. No tools or small items to be sold.

TERMS: Cash Day of Sale with Proper I.D.
Not Responsible for Accident or Theft

DON LARSON, Owner

PHONE GOWRIE, IOWA—515/352-3671

AUCTIONEERS: Glenn Anderson, John Lizer

Clerk: Anderson Auction Service

Childhood Memories of Farm

I grew up in a wonderful time, the early and mid-50's. Life was pretty simple, no TV or computers. We always had something to do. I don't remember being bored. My brother, Bob, and I had farm chores to do. My sisters helped Mom or played school or were next door with cousin, Caryl. The job I really hated on the farm was cleaning the chicken house. The ammonia smell would really get to you. I remember milking cows by hand until I was fourteen, about the time Dad sold the cows. We had no milking "stanchions", so you moved around a lot. The cows were our "power" lawn mowers in those days.

My youth was very good overall. I was active, so I assume that was why I was very accident prone. My first stitches were at the age of three, when I fell onto the cistern lid. When I was four and one half, I lost the little finger on my left hand in a rope/pulley accident at Uncle Bernard's farm. There was no replacing it, but being right handed it never bothered me. When I was about fourteen I fell from the barn track at Bernard's farm while chasing pigeons and broke bones in my left foot. I wore a cast for about six weeks, and I managed to break the cast once. I was on crutches for my church confirmation. I was in track in high school so that's probably why I thought I could jump a barb wire fence. I didn't make the jump, but I did get 16 stitches in my left leg.

As I got older I did a lot of day labor for neighbors such as baling hay, shelling corn, cement work, and walking beans, usually for about \$1 per hour. Usually with the hay baling, I worked for Martin and Vernon Telleen, two neighbors who did a lot of custom work in our area. I believe the first three summers out of high school I loaded over 100,000 bales each summer behind their baler, a New Holland Super 77. I only got sick once. I had eaten too much lunch and it was an extremely hot day and I fell off the rack. With some water and rest, I quickly recovered. Once I worked behind Bill Miller, who was Lyle Barkley's father-in-law, in some real heavy sweet clover hay and put holes, real holes, in some brand new blue jeans. Mother quickly got out her needle and thread and repaired them.

My childhood hobby was interesting. I collected and raised migratory waterfowl and ornamental pheasants, quail, and peacocks. My childhood friend, Gary Ehn and I went all over the Midwest, when we got our drivers licenses to seek out the best ones. I had to have a federal permit for the waterfowl and file an annual report. I had at least 14 species including, Canada geese, cackling geese, snow and blue geese, white front geese, mallards, pintails, green-wing, blue-wing, wood ducks, mandarin wood ducks, black ducks, American and European widgeons. With pheasants we had Ring necks, Golden, Amherst, Silver and Reeves. The quail were Bob-white, Valley and Gambel. We also had, Blue, White and Black- Shoulder peacocks. I had a federal permit for about ten years. That hobby kind of faded away when I got out of school and went to the military. It was a great hobby for a kid before video games and the like. We had tours here for 4-H kids and elementary school kids.



Don and Mary – Duck Pond 1958

I have a lot of special memories growing up on a farm in the time period of the 1940's and 1950's. The trees on our farm are of special significance. Until I was about 25 years old, our farmstead had 25 or 30 American elm trees that were probably planted in the 1920's. In 1967, Dutch elm disease killed every one. Don Will, Dad and I spent about two or three weeks cutting them all down and burning them. They held special memories for building tree houses in them, or just enjoying their beauty and shade in the summer time. When we were younger, Dad put up an extension ladder and built us a real tall tree swing. What fun to jump off a tall object and go swinging through the air. After 1968, Dad decided to fill in the gaps left, with evergreen trees. This would blend in with the evergreens planted in 1934 by Grandpa Warner. Dad and I planted over 100 eight foot evergreens by hand. We had previously planted about two dozen directly north of our house in 1958. I believe at peak population we had over 220 evergreens. Through disease, drought, etc., we still have close to 200, including what Grandpa planted in 1934.

One of the earliest memories was ice sledding with Leonard Schneider on our old ice covered pasture in the winter time. Leonard rigged up an old bed-sheet sail on a sled and on a windy day. Boy was that fun! Farms can have a mix of sweet and sour smells. There is nothing sweeter than fresh mown hay, fresh plowed earth or the scents of the apple blossoms or lilacs in spring. Even freshly picked corn has a neat scent. Of course there are all the different manure smells, or to some silage is unpleasant. To me the worst of all were rotten soybeans in the bottom of the grain elevator.

An exciting memory for all of us is when Mom got a new electric stove in 1950. This replaced the old cob and wood stove. One of my first jobs as a small boy was to bring cobs to the house from the old cob house near the garage. Mom was so excited; she had to boil some water for us to see. It must have taken some real skill to cook on the old stove.

A scary memory was one Sunday night, in early May, I believe 1965, when a tornado crossed north of Gowrie and eventually crossed the south part of our farm. I remember my ears popping from the low air pressure. This tornado damaged about three farms between home and Gowrie, but no one was hurt. About this time, we had hail stones the size of soft balls. The corn was just spiking up so it wasn't hurt. Mom kept three of them in our freezer for several years. Our neighbor had some come right thru their roof.

We've had some huge blizzards over the years. In the winter of 1961-62, I believe was record snow fall for our area. We didn't get off the place for over a week. It would not happen today, but the county snow plow operator, Leonard Sheker, plowed a path right down our driveway, because we didn't have equipment big enough to handle 6-8 foot snow drifts. In 1978-79, we had a lot of snow and our cattle were walking over our fences. We did have better equipment then to move snow.

While on the subject of winter, we cannot forget the Halloween ice storm of 1991. We had ice on the roads until the last week of March 1992. My wife, Jean was working as a nurse at Friendship Haven and could not make it home because of high-line; cross-country electric lines were down across the roads between here and Fort Dodge. They estimated there was 45 pounds of ice per foot on wires between 80 rod poles. No wonder they went down. We were without power on the farm for 24 hours, the longest we've ever been out. Jean's dad, Edwin Richman, was staying with us until we could get a place for him in Friendship Haven. Not a good time for an older man with health issues.

Then in 1993, we had a record wet year. From the middle of June until the end of July, 45 days to be exact, we had 27 inches of rain. What a miserable year to get any farming done or even mow the yard. A lot more drainage was done in subsequent years, including my land. Dad had put in almost 50,000 feet of drain tile since the 1950's on our land.

Another memory that happened, back in the 60's, was shortly after I was married and living away from home. Dad and Mom went to a school board convention. Dad asked me to pick up their mail and check the house every day. One mid-morning, I brought up the mail and the house was full of smoke. The furnace would not shut off and the whole house was ready to catch on fire. I quickly shut off the gas and called the furnace man. The house was so hot; it blistered some woodwork and of course killed all of Mom's houseplants and flowers. The first crazy thing I noticed was the intense heat had popped the top freezer door open, and some frozen bread dough had stretched all the way to the floor! It's still hard to believe.

When we were young kids, my brother, myself, Bob, and cousin, David, enjoyed playing basketball and baseball. I wasn't particularly athletic, but we had a lot of fun. Some of our neighbor kids and friends from town came out to play with us. Our Dads' were really into sports. My dad, Kenneth, was a champion horse shoe pitcher and took up bowling at 65. He had a few 200 games. Uncle Bernard erected a real nice baseball field in the pasture that was

between us, complete with backstop. Dad and Bernard had played a lot when they were young. They both could hit the highest fly balls you ever saw. The first basketball hoop was nailed to the old corn crib. Can you imagine playing on a dirt floor today? Later, Uncle Bernard cleaned away the bales in his big block barn so we could play inside on a wood floor. We wore two different basketballs smooth as could be, playing in that barn. We all played ball in school. We were average athletes. I played center on my high school team, although I was only 5' 11" tall. I grew from 5' 2" my freshmen year. I was captain of my high school track team my junior and senior years. I ran the distance races, half mile to cross country. I've always enjoyed playing and watching sports. We had no football in high school.

David had the honor of playing in the longest overtime basketball game in Iowa high school history. I believe, it was a sectional game at Burnside, in 1962, we were already called Prairie View and they were Central Webster. That game went nine overtimes with Central Webster eventually winning by two points. Four of our five starters fouled out. The next day was kind of a slow day for the boys. Besides my cousin, Dave, members were; Rich Peterson, Ron Peterson, Dan Telleen and Bruce Kullberg.

After high school we formed a "town" basketball team sponsored the town of Gowrie. One winter we played forty-four ballgames, playing other towns in the area. Our biggest game I remember was playing the junior varsity at Cedar Falls, then the Iowa State Teachers College. We were leading at the half, but we got creamed the second half, because they were in much better shape. Members on our team were Rich Peterson, a local carpenter, Norm Peterson, a math teacher, Lyle Knutson, teacher, Nik Telleen, farmer, Bill Gustafson, technician, and Joe Tjaden, student. We had a lot of fun playing in the old "Y" league in Fort Dodge. We wore blue uniforms with white lettering.

Going back to the late '40's, early '50's Gowrie had quite a semi-pro baseball team known as the Gowrie Athletics. They were very good, going to the National Tournament a few times. A couple of the players on that team were of major league caliber. They played games every week -end at the old Gowrie baseball field where the current track and football field is located. I was too young to play, but I had a lot of fun retrieving foul balls at a dime a piece.

Another farm memory was our huge pile of ear corn we had to put on the ground, before we built new grain bins. We were farming more land by this time. We put 8,000 bushels in one pile on concrete just south of the old hog house. We no longer had hogs. We had wire tunnels under the pile to insert the sheller drags and we pushed the bulk of the corn in to the drag with a tractor loader. It went smoother than I thought it would.

In 1977, we had a severe drought and hot weather. I had over 500 acres of corn that averaged only 65 bushel per acre. A home field, when the previous year had oats and hay, by government measure, only went a measly 3.5 bushel per acre. The only corn ears were on the end rows. We chopped the entire field for silage, which was a bad idea, because of no grain and it was hard to pack in a pile. At least a third was hauled away as manure in the spring.

Another feature on our farm that has been a dominant building on our farm, is our "feed shed" built in 1941. It was my Dad's idea to build a building where the cattle could eat under roof, out of the weather. The original concrete still looks good today. The ten foot concrete pad was

poured in January 1941. Dad said they covered it with 3-4 feet of straw. During the war it took a couple of years to build, with the lumber coming from three different lumberyards. In 1949, in the Farm Journal magazine, there was a featured article on this building. There also was a 14x40 block silo built off the middle of this building. Later this silo was demolished and three 20x80 Harvestore silos were built in the same area. I started pitching silage out of the old silo when I was 14. We didn't get a silo unloader until 1960. It was not a "fun" job in the winter time. I personally have seen a lot of feed go thru this building. My last cattle, 320 head, were fed for Marvin Koehler of Pierce, Nebraska. They were sold in August of 1982. I had three different lots for cattle with a capacity of 400-500 head. One fall we got doubled up for a while and we had 650 for about two months. Two order buyer bought most of my cattle, Ken Swanson of Dayton and Ray "Breezy" Wilson of Farnhamville; also, Fred Crispe of Laurel, Nebraska.



Circa 1958

From left: Bernard Larson, Kenneth Larson, Franklin Larson, Don Larson

Table of Contents



Don Feeding Cattle 1979



Don's cattle in feedlot

Cars, Trucks, Airplanes

This chapter will deal with all the vehicles I've been associated with in my adult life. I have not owned a car since 1975, but I had five different cars to that point. Since that time, Jean has owned all the cars and I the trucks. My first car was a '52 Chevy I bought from Lee Benson in 1959 for \$400. It was formerly owned by Erick Eckman of Gowrie. I had to borrow money for this car. I went to the Gowrie Bank and Art Lindquist Sr. was working there. He tried to talk me into a \$4,000 loan for a new Cadillac, of course, I said, "No thanks!"



Don's '52 Chevy

I had always wanted a '57 Chevy and my army buddy, Paul Issacson, found one at Sedalia, MO. It was a beautiful turquoise and white, with a turquoise and black interior, glass pack muffler and fender skirts. Boy was I proud of that car. I did have some transmission trouble with that car, maybe because of my lead foot. I wore both of those cars out. My third car was a '63 Pontiac Tempest, smaller car with four speed on the floor. This was a wonderful car. My next car was a '67 Pontiac Catalina also, a beautiful car. Roger Peterson of Lanyon and me went to Detroit to drive this car home. At that time you could watch them building your car. I bought all my Pontiacs at Fisher Garage in Stratford. Both Roy and Dalton Fisher were excellent mechanics. My last car was a 1974 Catalina which was a "Fisher" dealer car. It had all the bells and whistles for that day, power all the way through. This was really a sharp car, a two door hardtop. In the divorce proceedings, it left my possession. I believe the '74 retailed at

\$5,250. My first pick-up was a 1963 Chevy from Lee Benson. It had a 6-cylinder engine and a stock rack and no power steering. It cost \$1,650. After this truck I had a '65 Chevy ½ ton truck. It was a green color, which I didn't like. My next truck was a '69 Chevy. It was my goal at that time to have a new pick-up at least every five years. In 1974, I purchased my first 4x4 pickup. It was a sharp blue and white with large tires. At that time Chevrolet was advertising these pickups had the power to pull a 4-bottom plow. I hauled a lot of grain behind that truck with my DMI wagons. It was quite a horse. My fastest and little pick-up was my 1977 Silverado with a 454 engine and short box. Top speed with this was better than a small plane. During the "Farm Crisis" I had to step back and retrench a little. I bought a used red Chevy Silverado from Earl Brand, the Ford dealer in Gowrie. It was a 4-wheel drive and served my needs for a few years. I really down-sized next, and bought a new S-10 Chevy pick-up from Lee Benson in 1982. I believe it was the first V6 engine in an S-10 in this area. This was a really good little truck. I drove the S-10 almost 300,000 miles. We could get 20 miles to the gallon winter or summer. It was handy transportation. I leased two or three pick-ups in the early 90's to keep an updated model. The first was a 1990 blue Silverado Chevy from McGrath Chevy of Cedar Rapids. The second Chevy was a 1994 Chevy short box. It was a beautiful little truck. The color was a brilliant blue. Our problem with the 1994 was the door locks and the way they were placed. I did lock myself out at least twice. After that lease was up, I started buying trucks again. The next truck was a used '95 Silverado from Pat Clemmons of Boone. I later traded this for a new 1997 green pick-up. This was a very nice pick-up. I averaged 20,000 to 25,000 miles per year on my vehicles. So much for Chevy loyalty, I traded the '97 to Des Moines Toyota for a Tundra. A very nice truck, the Tundra was Motor Trend truck of the year four years in a row. I had the opportunity to trade up to a 2010 Tundra that I currently have. This has been the finest truck I've ever had. Smooth running, powerful, great braking, easy to drive. The gas mileage is not so good. I would like to down-size again, but not ready yet. The trucks I have talked about have started at \$1,650 to \$38,000 on sticker price. Wow!



2007 Toyota Tundra

These comments will deal with the airplanes I've known in my life. When I grew up it seemed like everyone had a small plane or knew someone that did. I personally have about 30 hours of actual time in the pilot's seat of a small plane. I took lessons at the Jefferson airport in 1976. It was a very interesting experience. My first flight as a young boy was with Gus Ness of Somers, who was a cousin of my Aunt Frances Larson. One Sunday afternoon, Gus landed in a red clover field next door on my Uncle Bernard's farm. The hayfield had grown to about 6-12 inches high, so the small plane barely had enough power to get off the ground. Once airborne, we had a great flight around Gowrie and our neighborhood. We circled the Gowrie water tower close enough to see some of the painted letters had run a little bit. The longest flight in a small plane was with Bill Schump of Harcourt. Although it was a four seater, it seemed a little tight. We flew from Fort Dodge to Dalhart, Texas to see Bill Marten's farming operation. I believe it was over 700 air miles. I also flew with Schump to his farm in northern Missouri.

My neighbors, the Paul Farnhams, had five family members with pilot's license. I believe Dale Farnham had a commercial endorsement. The Farnham family had a half mile grass air-strip, one and a half miles west of my house. So many times they approached home directly over my

place. Another family in our area that was known for flying was the Percy Peterson dairy family of Callender. Percy bought his three sons, one airplane to share, when they were of driving age. David never flew, but Phillip and Paul flew a lot. Paul's son, Kevin, tells of his dad flying to Fort Dodge to date his mother, Arlene, who was from Fort Dodge. That had to impress a girl when you came to pick her up in an airplane. Older people than me that had a pilot's license were; Kenny Fricke, Bob Gross, Pike Forsmark, Bob Jacobson. Bob Jacobson taught several people how to fly, including Nik Telleen. Other pilots around are Roger Hade, Duane Peterson, Duane and Dave Olson, Gene and Dean Black, and many others I'm not aware of at this writing. Of course, I've flown in a lot of big commercial airlines in my life, some as long as nine hours at a time, but there is no feel for flying, except in a small plane.

Other Events: Health, Mud, Fire

I've always thought of myself as a pretty healthy guy active and not too many bad habits. However, I have had some major health issues. In 1967, through a mosquito bite, I contracted encephalitis (sleeping sickness). I believe I got this in the fall while driving an open tractor pulling a silage cutter in corn. I thought I was just over-tired from fall work, but I passed out and was taken to the Greene County Hospital for a ten day stay. A spinal tap revealed that was what I had. There were only three documented cases in Iowa that year. I lost 30 pounds and slept most of that entire winter, but by spring I was strong enough to resume farming and working again.

After that I only had minor procedures, like gallbladder, four hernias repaired and a few cuts and bruises, until about 2004. That is when I got tics and pain in my face. After going to a neurologist, I was diagnosed with Trigeminal Neuralgia, a condition where an artery rubs against the facial nerve (Trigeminal) causing extreme pain. I tolerated this for a year or two with nerve deadening drugs, until we went to Iowa City in 2006 where Dr. Hitchon performed five hours of surgery to insulate the nerve from the artery. This surgery was called micro-vascular decompression. Dr. Hitchon had performed about twelve of these surgeries up until August of that year. So far, so good; what a relief to be rid of that extreme pain

In the spring of 2013, we were traveling in southern Iowa when I had this sudden pain in my stomach. My dear wife, Jean, made an appointment for a medical check-up in Fort Dodge. After many tests they found I had an aneurysm on my ascending aorta and a bad heart valve. Dr. Joyce, the heart surgeon at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, and his Resident associate performed seven hours of surgery to repair the aneurysm, put in a new pig valve, and one bypass. After rehab and a better awareness of heart health, I feel good now. Every breath is now a new lease on life. Appreciation and respect for life in general.

Other events of interest in my life include both "wet and dry". I think in the late 70's when we had a lot of cattle, the neighbors, Ed McWeeny and Tracey Stoner (2-Way-Farms) had a lot of cattle next door. It was a very wet, muddy year, and our lots were too full for the conditions. One day I heard a commotion next door. Stoner had gone out in a muddy lot to pick up a sick steer with his big Case end-loader tractor. He had gotten stuck so deep and so bad, the top step was even with the ground level. They started by calling a wrecker to pull him out of the mud. The first one broke his boom truck. The next two wreckers gave up. That cost about \$1,200 and still stuck. Another neighbor, Laurin Stanek, brought down his big end-loader and dug a path to the stuck machine and got him out. Needless to say it killed the whole day.

About this same period, one night during a severe storm, I had 220 head of cattle stampede thru a railroad tie fence into an 80 acre bean field. We eventually rounded them up again. They snapped an eight inch post at the ground.

On the other extreme, the fall of 1997, was extremely dry and there were many field fires in our entire area. The worst was caused by the railroad, when a rail car started throwing sparks in high wind out to the fields. This started fires from Callender to Lena. Our fire departments had all they could do. The oddest thing I remember was where the ear had hung on a corn stalk, the

cob was still intact on the stalk, but the shell corn had heated enough to fall off the cob and onto the ground in a neat pile.

Next door about this time a corn field fire at McWeeny's was started by a pick-up truck pulling wagons to the end of the field. This was a very scary situation as it was a very windy day blowing towards the building site. The Gowrie Fire Dept. came, but they were not winning the battle. I had my John Deere 8100 hooked up to a stalk cutter and disc, so I went over and started knocking down the standing corn to try to create a fire break. It finally worked after some heart stopping moments. I had ear corn two feet deep on my tractor steps.

Another day a neighbor, Bob Anderson, had burned some trash that morning before the wind came up and it rekindled later in the day. That fire traveled over a mile. We were driving a mile north of the fire. There was thick black smoke and we couldn't see the Anderson farm. As we were calling 911, a car came driving thru the smoke from the south. We couldn't believe it. Two little 80 year old women from Gowrie, Vera Ranniger and Ruth Roach, were tooling along checking out the fire. They were lucky they didn't drive in the ditch.

Great Mechanics, Mowing

A few words about the great mechanics I have known. I know I am not a good mechanic. I know what works, but to get everything in place to make it happen, I can't do it. The first mechanic I knew personally was Hugh Miller, who worked for Lundberg IH in Dayton. Hugh was good and very careful. Kenny Sanders took over for Miller at Dayton. Kenny is still working and an excellent mechanic. He has always had a full work-load. He has his own shop in Dayton. Kenny went over and above what was expected. When my feed wagons broke down one cold winter night, he came to the farm and got everything running again. Kenny was also a professional tractor puller for a few years.

My next mechanics are the Ferguson family from Pocahontas. Kenny Sanders introduced me to them to repair my skid loader. Don, Denny, and Doug Ferguson are all natural mechanics. Don and Denny are retired now. They sold their business to Pocahontas Implement. Doug works for the new company and does a lot of their small engine work. I have bought a skid loader and five different riding lawn mowers from Pocahontas.

Locally I rely on Matt Hall of Gowrie for all my John Deere work. Matt is the same age as our sons, Alan and Jon. Matt worked for the big John Deere store at Harcourt, before setting up his own business on his acreage between Gowrie and Harcourt. Matt is very experienced and knowledgeable on John Deere.

I mentioned lawn mowers previously and this is one of my passions for maintaining a respectable looking farm. I now mow about five and one half acres every time out. I've probably had over 15 mowers over the years. I've had Ariens, Snapper, Yazoo, Deines, Country Clippers and now Ex-Mark made by the Toro Company. Mowers have evolved like everything else. I love my 60 inch ExMark. It never scalps, the larger cut done on a golf course look. It's very rugged and dependable. I put between 125-150 hours on a mower every summer. When I was a boy, we mowed the yard with a 16 inch push mower and my Dad mowed the road ditch with a five foot sickle mower and an 8-N Ford tractor. Mowers are part of my life. Two cows also ate grass in the farm yard.

Current Activities: Family, Windmills, Pipe-lines

As we summarize our life and different events, it hardly seems possible that we've been involved in so many activities. Life is short, but you can put as much into your life as you want to. The landscape has certainly changed around here in my lifetime. We've went from around 80 farms with machinery in Clay Township to around 22 at today's count. Schools, churches, communities reflect this change. Good or bad, that is the way it is. We used to fill a 46 passenger school bus in about six miles. With the current sharing our school has around 1,200 students K-12, with maybe the largest square mile school district in Iowa. Last summer, 2014, over 100 wind turbines were constructed in Clay and Burnside townships. They were subsidized by the federal government at 3 ½ million dollars apiece. Their electric power goes thru Mid-America to Illinois. Yes, the farmers, landowners get paid, but at what price? There are a lot of divided opinions on the windmills, a 20-30 year commitment. Also, in the works now is a transcontinental oil pipeline from North Dakota to southern Illinois. It will be a 30 inch pipe bringing crude oil to the refinery. This line is proposed to cross choice farm land between Gowrie and our farm. Both the windmills and pipeline do not affect my farm. I am glad for this, because I don't want to deal with this. I live here because I always loved the landscape of the land and the individual farms our ancestors worked and cared for.

Another change in the last few years, are the building of these big hog confinement buildings that hold two or three thousand pigs each. Most of these are contract operations for the mega corporations like Cargill, Tyson, Swine Graphics and the like. We now have about fifteen of these buildings with-in four miles of my home.



Family Picture 2007

Front (left to right) Wesley, Lisa, Michael, Jenna, Wyatt

Middle (left to right) Payten, Erin, Don, Jean, Julie, Zach

Back (left to right) Brett, Alan, Trevor, Jill, Jon, Matthew, Austin

Enough about my life and activities, I know I haven't covered everything, but I've tried to highlight the major events. I will close out this chapter with a few words about my family members. The love of my life, Jean, is quite a lady. Trained as a registered nurse, she is a great mother, homemaker, and a wonderful cook. Family genealogy is one of her hobbies and family means a great deal to her and me. Her Christian faith is very important to her, church and Bible study is essential. We are both thankful, that our four kids are healthy and doing well. Jon, our oldest, lives in Manson with his wife, Jill, and three boys; Austin, Zachary and Matthew. Jon works at Silgan in Fort Dodge. Jon is athletic and has a mechanical aptitude. Jon enjoys modern history. Alan, who is just five months younger than Jon, lives in rural Gowrie with his wife, Erin, and son Payten. Alan is also mechanical, works at the John Deere planter works at Paton. Alan enjoys helping others with different projects. His big passion is RC (remote control) racing. He races on a regular basis with his friend Tony of Fort Dodge. They have events all over the mid-west. Our daughter, Lisa, lives at Paton with her youngest son, Wyatt. Lisa is a teacher's associate in Greene County School. She's really good with the small kids and really enjoys doing it. Lisa likes to read, has many friends and never met a stranger. Our youngest daughter, Julie, lives in Des Moines and has degrees in education and nursing. Julie had a rough start as a young adult. She had a brain tumor (benign) and had two different surgeries to correct this.

Table of Contents

Julie is very active with her church, Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines. Thru her school and church, she has traveled to Europe, Asia, and South America as well as projects in this country. Family is very important for Julie.

I always had an unspoken goal of seeing my grandchildren grow to maturity. We are rapidly getting to that goal. Our oldest and my only granddaughter is Jenna, Lisa's daughter. Jenna is now 27 years young. She is pretty and intelligent. She is trained in computer graphics and now works for A-1 in Jefferson. She is also a mother of Anna, a cute little girl who will be three years old in 2015. We hope the very best for Jenna. Her brother, Michael, and his friend, Jessie, live in Grand Junction with their daughter, Krista. Mike works for West Central Coop in Jefferson. Mike, while in the military, served with the Honor Guard in Washington D.C. and was part of the funeral guard at Arlington National Cemetery. With this background, he is interested in pursuing a law enforcement career in security. Mike is athletic and keeps in shape with daily workouts. Our next oldest grandson is Trevor, Alan's oldest son. Trevor is now 25 years old and works for Vossberg Enterprises at Farnhamville. Trevor is polite, popular young man. He has five years of college. His original goal was to be a high school teacher and wrestling coach. He was good wrestler in high school and still works out on the weights. We want him to do whatever he enjoys in life. His younger brother, Brett, works for a farmer near Moorland. Brett, also, has a two year certification for diesel mechanics at Iowa Central College. His girlfriend, Josie, is working toward a nursing degree. Brett is a very nice young man. Wesley, Lisa's second son, is our tallest so far at 6'6". He is going to Iowa Central for lawn and turf management. He has a lot of experience in Greene County grooming the baseball fields. Wyatt will be a senior at Greene County Schools. He is Lisa's youngest, a very bright, witty young man. He likes to help his Grandma Tipton and be involved in school activities. Austin is also tall, around 6'3" at this writing. He is out for football and basketball at Manson NW Webster School. He is a very nice, handsome young man. He is 16 and has job experiences in detassling corn. Payten is 15 and will take drivers education this summer. He is a computer whiz and will probably have a career tied to computers. Zach just turned 14 and likes sports. He has a statistical mind and challenges Grandpa on all types of sports trivia. He is also a great kid and fun to be around. The youngest of our grandkids is Matthew who will be ten years old this summer. When you have two older brothers, there is not much else to know when you get to high school. Matthew is a very likeable, outgoing boy, who is going to do very well in life.



Don and Jean



Don and Jean 2004

I am blessed to have such a fine family. No we are not perfect by any means, but the joy and satisfaction to know that I have such a fine group of people to carry on in this earthly pilgrimage gives me satisfaction and a sense of pride. I am confident that my parents and grandparents would feel the same way. So it is - my life is but one grain of sand among all of the people who have walked on this earth. Thank you for reading my life story.

